

HOW WE CAPTURED THE "SCHOOLMASTER."

BY W. H. MACY.

We had lowered our boats one fine day in chase of a school of sperm whales which were moving quickly to leeward, appearing to have lately had the regularity of their habits disturbed—or, in whaleman's parlance, to have been "gallied." (This word "gallied," which is in every-day use among members of the craft, would seem to be a corruption of the obsolete verb "gallow," to frighten, as used by Shakspeare and other old writers. Thus we have in King Lear, "The wrathful skies gallow the deep wanderers of the dark.")

The sperm whales on the cruising-ground where we then were—among the Micronesian groups, nearly under the equator—are generally of small size, the cows yielding from fifteen to twenty barrels of oil each when full grown. But it was not uncommon to find in company with the school of cows and calves one patriarchal old bull who was dignified with the honorable title of "schoolmaster;" and of course there was always an eager desire to capture this

old fellow, whose yield would be equal to that of half a dozen cows. In this case no large whale had been seen from the mast-head before the boats were lowered, and consequently there was no special look-out from the boats for any particular animal.

As we drew near the whales, the mate's boat leading a little, the outer or "off" whales of the school seemed to take the alarm, and, the panic spreading to the rest, one after another rounded her hump out, and, skimming her flukes just above the surface, went out of sight. It was evident they would "stand not upon the order of their going," and we all redoubled our efforts with the paddles, hoping yet to be in time for the last straggler. Another and yet another went down, and when, as Mr. West's boat was shooting into the slick water, he gave the word to his boat-steerer, "Stand up, Tom!" there remained only a single cow with a very small calf. Tom drew back his iron for a dart; but the cow

had already pitched, and was just out of reach.

"Try the calf, Tom," said Mr. West.

With a twinge of conscience at what seemed wanton cruelty, Tom sent his shining barb into the body of the infant whale, who seemed scarcely able to carry off the weapon in his descent. However, down he went, and Mr. West gave him line freely, while we in the other boats hovered round the spot. For we were pretty sure that when he rose again the mother would rise with him, and fall a victim to her parental instinct; while the chance was good of the whole school "bringing to," so that several of them might be captured. In such case we might secure a good "cut" of oil, by striking a whale which, alone, was of little or no value.

The calf had sounded out perhaps fifty fathoms, when the strain was suddenly relaxed, and the line hung slack.

"We are loose!" cried the mate. "Haul in line!"

Then shouting to us to "pull ahead," so we might have a chance again when the school should rise, he and his crew proceeded leisurely to gather in and coil down what they supposed to be stray line.

Presently the mate's line seemed to be foul of something which offered a strange kind of resistance to his efforts. It did not bring up firmly, "all standing," but it appeared to be grating or chafing round some obstacle, so that he still gained on it, though making slow progress.

"What's the matter, Mr. West?" inquired the captain, whose boat was just passing, he having lowered from the ship a little later than the rest.

"Don't know, sir. Something's foul of my line."

Just then there was a heavy surge that boxed his boat down with her cheeks nearly to the surface of the water; then the same grating and slipping again, and he got in a few more fathoms.

"Something's under us," said the mate, again. "Slack line, and stand by your oars!"

The oars were put in motion, "backing water," and the boat steered off clear of the

danger. Hardly had this been accomplished, when there was a commotion and a lifting of the sea, as it were, just ahead of the boat; and with a loud roar, as he broke water and ejected his first spout, the ponderous "junk" of a ninety-barreler was forced up into view! He straightened, showing his immense breadth of beam, and with a thundering flap of his immense flukes, which half drowned Mr. West and his crew in a shower of spray, he started to windward, towing the boat after him. It was evident that Mr. West was fairly "harnessed" to the veritable schoolmaster, and we hooked down lustily to our oars for a stern chase.

"Clear away my lance!" shouted the excited mate, who was now in his element. "We're fast to him, solid, Tom; but how, the Lord only knows; I don't."

"If that's the whale that I struck," said the boat-steerer; "he has *grown* out of all knowledge within ten minutes."

We in the other boats were all as puzzled as the mate himself. But we were coming to the rescue as fast as muscle and determination could bring us. The larboard boat was hooked to the schoolmaster; that was enough glory for the present, and we should know more in due time.

He soon slackened his pace, giving us all an opportunity to fasten to him; and when we hauled up to give him the death-wounds with our keen lances, the mystery was fully explained.

The large whale, while plunging in the depths of the sea, had fouled the line with his lower jaw, and the strain had drawn the harpoon out of the tender little calf. In his subsequent struggles the monster had rolled over, and the boat's crews had been hauling the line across his jaw until they had got all the slack in, and the harpoon and pole had formed a secure toggle across his "jole," at the corner of the mouth. In another hour we hauled him, with his broadside turned up to the sun, alongside the good ship Marcia, highly elated at the singular accident by which we had made this involuntary exchange of a worthless little calf for a full-grown bull with full ninety barrels of spermaceti in his jacket.

HULDAH.

BY JOHN. A. PETERS.

A GIRL, a slim thing of fifteen, with hands clasped, and face working, stood leaning against a giant boulder jutting out from a shelving bank, watching the rolling waves of the great deep as they throbbed and beat tumultuously against the cragged shore. A weird child she was; uncanny, the fishermen living along the shore called her. Small and straight-featured, with a dark face and great restless gray eyes that burned and flashed underneath their lengthy lashes of black; that were woefully passionate or calmly prayerful, just as the mood of their erratic owner changed. A small determined mouth, the lips thin and compressed, now apart and glowing, showing two rows of teeth whitely even as seed-pearls. A broad monarchical brow, too high, perhaps, to realize a painter's idea of beauty, but denoting intellect, if cultivated, of no common order, from which were pushed back, as if they wearied her, two oppressive braids of midnight hair.

The shades of night were settling fast over the earth. Slowly in the west the sun was sinking to rest amidst an oriflamb of golden splendor. Yet still Huldah Brown leaned, or crouched rather, against the projecting boulder, troubled with restless ambitious thoughts, such as girls of fifteen are rarely ever troubled with. But then, Huldah was dissimilar to any other child I know of; and even at that early age a longing to escape these quiet scenes and plunge into the very heart of the great city, in the midst of its turmoil and confusion, where change is the order of the day, and not this tedious monotony which she hated with her whole heart, possessed her. Nothing around her cared she for save the sea which was never quiet, which alone could still the cravings of her heart at times, and where she often came for rest, especially at twilight, and where she would lean as she did now against the mammoth rock, or crouch down beside it, and lay her head upon it, sometimes sobbing, sometimes quiet as the dead.

"O, to think," she cried, beginning to pace the strand with quick impetuous steps, "that I must pass my days here, must be

tied down to this uneventful life, when my whole soul revolts at the thought. And I so young—but fifteen! Must it be? O Heavenly Father!" raising her brown face aloft, "if thou dost exist, I beg that thou wilt change my course of life; make it a more tumultuous one. Relieve it, I pray thee, of this intense quiet which is killing me—driving me mad! Anything, I beseech thee, but this deathly stillness! If not, I will rebel—will defy fate—and, in spite of the chains that hold me downward—spite of everything that tends to keep me from the world I worship, I will yet plunge into it, though I make myself miserable by so doing; for I cannot—cannot bear it! I long for action—for power—for wealth—for everything that is denied me! O poverty! thou greatest of curses heaped upon man, why didst thou not attack some one in my stead? Do so yet, I beg. Seize some one else in thy talen-like clutches. Discrown her, and enthrone me. Let her feel the gnawing pangs I have been forced to feel, and let me enjoy the luxuries that wealth alone can purchase for a while. What a change it would be for me and good patient grandfather! No more willow baskets to weave—no more hickory canes to fashion out and to carry and sell to the fine ladies and gentlemen who come and spend the summer season at H—— by the sea. How I envy them—the ladies, robed in trailing silks, decked out with jewels that flash and strive to emulate the stars in brightness; their showy carriages drawn by splendid steeds; their beauty, and the adulation they receive; and, most of all, the access they have to books. I thirst for knowledge, pant for it! Why should I not be well educated, and soar above the common mass of people? There is that within my ambitious heart which would make me rise, if I but had an opportunity. I am possessed of a superior intellect, and 'tis too bad, altogether too bad, that I'm doomed to such a life. I say 'tis not right. I can't and wont recognize a law that will shower one man with blessings and deprive another even of the common necessities of life. If there be a God,—but no, I'll not proceed in my blasphemy

—there must be one, else how came the restless sea I love so well here? these stupendous rocks that rise out of the earth so firm and bold—these granitic hills that tower aloft, medallioned with flowers, studied with trees; and the luminary in the heavens that gives light and heat to this mysterious world which I almost worship for its beauty? Ah yes! it must have taken some power superior to man's to have created all these things, and yet—" She relapsed into silence, with the thought uncompleted.

Unconsciously she had been uttering her words aloud, as she was in the habit of doing when alone in this secluded spot, where but few of the gay fashionables from the neighboring watering-place ever came. She checked her walk, and sat down beneath the shadow of the rock, drawing the scant dress low over her bare feet, heeding nothing, seeing nothing, not even the sea which dashed its white spray over her. And but a few feet from her, hidden from observation by the umbrageous branches of a low brown-bodied tree, seated on an old moss-covered stump, was a man scanning her every movement, studying her with eyes afire with eagerness—with the most decided interest—himself a curious study. He was a man of thirty, perhaps older, as it was hard to determine his age by his looks. A great massive form, which many a man might envy for its grace and strength; a swarthy face illumined by piercing black eyes, in whose fathomless depths dwelt a gleam of evil, with tangled brows meeting above; a grand dark brow, unfurrowed by a wrinkle, overshadowed by damp clusters of purplish-black snakelike hair. A face of strength, of beauty, where good and bad blended inseparably—such a face as Lucifer might have owned before he became entirely hardened in his sin. Not a happy face, anything but that, but one that would attract you as a volcano about to burst might a precipice preparing to tumble, a Titan oak ready to topple over when the last telling blow upon it is struck. His mouth was nearly hidden by a mustache black as Erebus—a sneering, cynical mouth, whose lips rarely ever parted in a smile, but when they did it transformed his whole countenance wonderfully.

Below, the water babbled, cried and shrieked aloud as if it were mocking the wretched girl whose aspirations could never

be realized; above, in the whispering trees that trailed like an arch over the man's head, the birds flitted in and out like thoughts that come and go in contented hearts; and away in the distance Phœbus was slowly sinking to rest, glorifying the earth radiantly ere he disappeared. The scene maddened the man whose eyes had roved from the girl's powerful face—the thundering water, the sinking sun and the caroling birds, and his features writhed as he sat there.

"Ah, that water," he said, "it sounds like the voices of demons, like the one jeering within me, ever inhabiting my breast. It brings up recollections in my youth that I would fain forget, but which I cannot, cannot; down to the grave will they go with me. Ah, my life! what a miserable failure it has been; how I am shackled down by—just as yonder girl is by poverty! Poor unsatisfied thing, how I pity her! for with her insatiable cravings is she not akin to me? Can I not alter the fate she believes she's destined to? Lift her from the slough of despair—from hated poverty—to the position she prays for? *Ma foi!* but she's a queer little thing. How vehement and ambitious she is, and how her eyes blaze—for all the world like leaping flames; and how her hair coils about her head—as a big reptile might. A bizarre, overbearing child with a touch of cruelty, a tinge of atheism about her, also a nature as restless as the moaning sea. And yet I pity her, for unless she is delivered from the poverty she scorns—unless she has something to occupy her mind besides weaving willow withes in baskets, her life is a complete wreck. She has a taste for literature, too, judging from her bitter sayings, and her colorless brow, which a potentate might envy. If only that obstacle were removed from my path I would—But pshaw! why dream of what's impossible? I believe I'll accost yonder Nalad, though, if only to see her eyes scintillate and arouse the scoffing imp within her. 'Pon my soul, I'm really interested in this girl who weaves baskets and longs for power."

He suited the action to his words and walked toward her with long rapid strides. She saw him not. With hands locked over her knees, with a world of misery looking out of her great gray eyes, she sat still as a statue hewn from stone, her black locks falling over her brown frayed-out robe, her feet peeping out brown and bare underneath.

"Little girl?"

The deep, musical, yet sarcastic voice fell upon her hearing; she started, glanced up, and beheld the man before her. She rose to her feet. "Well?" The monosyllable was jerked from her lips as she stared him in the face, a nameless fear centering at her heart as she felt rather than saw the magnificent eyes riveted upon her. In that one moment she recognized the man who was to prove her bane or blessing henceforth. She did not stop to argue how foolish and senseless the idea. She only knew that the something stealing over her, intangible as a shadow, uncomfortable as a presentiment, and horrible as a nightmare, was true; that he, and no other, was the person who would elevate her to the seat of honor she craved. Whatever sent the thought there she could not tell; she was mad to place confidence in it, yet she did. It might be the fabulous legends, the strange superstitious tales her grandfather oft repeated to her at nightfall, when the wind shook their tiny cabin and the snow fell and drifted around it; she could not tell; she knew if it were not true she had no desire to burden the earth longer—that she had far rather be buried beneath the moaning waves. Down-drooped the lashes over her eyes, veiling them from view; tighter locked themselves together the symmetrical brown hands as she awaited what she felt was coming.

"Resume your seat, child," he said, with a gesture; "I have much to say to you. You are not afraid of me?" as she obeyed not his mandate, but smiled wearily.

"Hardly, sir." But as she sank on the seat indicated by him fear grappled at her heart.

He flung himself full length down by her side, resting his leonine head upon his doubled-up arm. "Uncanny mortal," he began, playfully, "art thou of the earth, earthy? or art thou a mermaid dwelling in a cool coral-lined cave below those waters, only come ashore to comb out these elfish locks of yours and get a breath of fresh air? My! your robe is saturated with brine, and some alga is adhering to it."

"Do talk sense, or go away," the girl retorted, a bit impatiently. "You are making fun of me, and I won't have it. The sea splashed its drops over my dress, and the seaweed I gathered myself."

"Indeed!" Aside. "The little despot!" Then to her. "Your explanation is satis-

factory, Child of the Sea. You have a name, I suppose?"

No answer.

"And it is—"

"Huldah, if you will have it. Do go away, and don't bother me."

"Huldah," and to the listening girl his voice was sweet as pattering raindrops, "listen to me. I have been eavesdropping. I overheard, gratuitously, your monologue upon blasphemy."

"You did?" she said, without a trace of anger; "you must have been agreeably entertained."

"I was, child, for I recognize in you a kindred spirit. As in me, good and bad struggle and war in your soul like enemies, and, as in me, the bad asserts its supremacy and is paramount. You are so constituted that you can no more subdue your unsatisfied longings than the traveller on the heated desert his insatiable thirst. I do not blame you. And so," he queried, "you are tired of this life of stagnation, and wish a change?"

"Wish a change!" She turned her brown face upon him, passion leaping in her eyes. "God alone knows how much I wish it. Rather than end my days here, I would throw myself into yonder mighty deep, and allow the billows to chant a requiem over my departed soul. Listen to them now; they roar as if in quest of prey."

She beat a tattoo upon the ground with her foot, and still Maro Remington leisurely surveyed her. "Heavens!" he murmured, "I could love this girl, if— But a truce to such nonsense! Why, she is a homely, unformed thing, with a nature wild as the lion's of the forest, the tiger's of the jungle. Still, I cannot be mistaken; she has in her the material for a magnificent woman, and will yet be heard of in the great world she would fain plunge into. Huldah!" he cried.

"Yes," her eyes never raised to his; off to the sea were they again wandering, yet every nerve was on the *qui vive* for what was coming, coolly as she appeared to receive the intelligence.

"I'm about to make a proposition to you, so strange that it will carry you back to the dark ages—about to give you the means to lift you from poverty to wealth. All I shall require in payment is a single promise, that you'll give me what I may exact from your hands when the proper time arrives, which

I give you my word shall not be until you are fully prepared for it. Will you do it?"

"What is it, may I ask?" Eager was her tone, devouring was the surprise she felt.

"That I cannot tell you. It must be kept a secret till the right time comes for its disclosure. You can make the promise or not, just as you choose. If you make it, however, you must keep it to the letter; will you?"

"Huldah Brown never perjures herself, sir; she knows what it is to break her word," and a smile of scorn crept across the thin lips. "Yes, I'll make the promise, and keep it," she added, recklessly, "no matter what it may prove to be, if you will but provide a way for me to escape from my present surroundings, which I detest. O, words are too tame to tell how much! Can you do it? Are you rich?"

He laughed sardonically. "Ay, Huldah, I have more of the root of evil than I know what to do with, which is a strange thing to assert in this grasping, avaricious world, where money is the idol men and women bow down to and worship, and cannot get enough of. I am a millionaire." He spoke bitterly, scoffingly.

The great eyes of the maiden opened wide. "How happy you must be," she said, simply.

"Happy! If a creature upon earth realizes what it is to be miserable, I'm that person. My life is one perpetual torment—a desert without an oasis."

"I am sorry for you, sir." And Huldah laid her wee brown hand in sympathy upon his giant white one resting on the rock. Its dainty touch sent an odd thrill of delight electric-like through the man's entire being. Like one intoxicated he bent above her, his swarthy face alive with passion, his bearded mouth quivering, the brilliance of his eyes so dazzling that the untamed thing before him for the first time in her life was afraid, and she buried her face in the one hand at her disposal; the other he was crushing unwittingly in his. The idea he had formed became a settled one.

"Huldah," he asked, "have you any living relative beside your grandfather?"

"None that I know of, sir. Grandfather and I are all alone in the world."

"Good! I'm glad there are no incumbences. Now listen. I have an aunt, an aged spinster, residing in Boston, who depends upon me somewhat for her liveli-

hood. She lives in grand style, is a highly cultivated woman, and will do anything in her power to please her graceless nephew—meaning myself, of course. I shall send you and your grandfather there, providing we can gain his consent to your plan. If he'll not be dependent upon me, I'll contrive something whereby he can obtain his living. For five years I shall not look upon your face; shall not inquire even in the most indirect manner concerning you; to me you shall be as one dead in all that while. But in the meantime you must be improving yourself, studying with might and main, so that when I return from foreign lands, whither I'm going, you'll be in every sense of the word an educated woman. Already you are far more intelligent than the majority of girls of your age; your speech is grammatical, and devoid of the provincialisms of the neighborhood. How's that, child?"

"Because I am not akin to the people here, and never associate with them in the least. My grandfather is a gentleman, was recognized by the world as such years and years ago. He was rich at that time, but became involved in speculations which turned out disastrously; and when all his wealth was swept from him, he removed to this quiet place with me—my parents being dead—where he has lived the life of a recluse since. We make baskets, and I sell them, so we do not starve. During the winter, when blockaded with snow, grandfather gets out his precious books, of which he has a store, and superintends my education, for he's determined I shall not grow up an ignoramus. I can speak French and German quite fluently; at least the visitors of II—tell me so when I carry them baskets and am obliged to speak in those tongues; have some knowledge of Latin, and ever since I was ten years of age grandfather has compelled me to pore over musty old encyclopedias and histories, so I have amassed some, if not much, useful knowledge. But withal," bitterness creeping in her voice, "I am as ignorant of the ways of the world as a very babe."

Riotous feelings were now raging within and making a Pandemonium of her young bosom. How dissatisfied she was with her present condition!

"Huldah," and the wee hand fluttering in his grasp was crushed more tightly, yet she felt not the pain, so absorbed was she

in what he was saying; "I can imagine somewhat your feelings; waters of Marah are continually overwhelming your soul. But from this time your life shall be metamorphosed. Bury your wicked seditious thoughts so deep they can never be resuscitated. I, your guardian, don't fancy a scoffing girl for my ward. And now a few remarks further before we go and see grandfather, and put the premeditated plan in the way of accomplishment. While I am absent I don't want you converted into a thoroughly fashionable woman; rather than that I should prefer you to be a trifle *outré* in appearance, as you are now. Above all things, don't neglect your health. Take good long morning walks as a matter of hygiene, and grow up with a strong unbroken constitution, for no woman can be correctly termed handsome, Huldah, unless endowed with perfect health; and your features are undeniably plain."

"And yet, sir, I prophesy when you return I shall be an attractive fascinating woman. I covet beauty so much it cannot be denied me. O, I am sure I shall be beautiful!"

She spoke confidently, as some prophetess of old might have spoken—not proudly, but triumphantly, with a feeling of elation in her tone, inspiring him who heard it with an implicit faith in her prediction.

"Well, I hope so, child, for your sake. Now perhaps we had better hasten to your grandfather's cabin, and have the business transacted at once. But say, Huldah, a word. Until the five years come around I shall not anger you with my presence, as I stated before, but just five years from to-night—mark well the time—at eight o'clock, if alive and well, though an insurrection of the elements be going on around me, though wind and rain, thunder and lightning struggle together, and make night hideous, I will be with you. If dead, then in ceremonies will I rise before you. Will you come?"

"I will. If not in body, then in spirit. Some manifestation of my presence will be with you."

"I believe you, Huldah. Now will you kiss me?"

"No sir."

"Nor shake hands with me?"

"Yes—if you desire it."

He did, evidently, for he wrung the hand she extended until she cried out for very

pain; then releasing it, they wended their way to the cabin. Nestling lazily underneath a panoply of trees, it stood. The door was open, and through it they beheld a man sitting on a heap of willow branches, with withes in his hand. They accosted him. He answered not; he was dead. Whilst Huldah and the dark-browed man were entering into a compact of good or evil, his soul had escaped from its frail tenement and winged its way to the beautiful realms of light above. Forgotten now were all Huldah's wicked dreams and aspirations. With a wail that rang through the cabin and resounded over the hills, the girl flung herself down by the dead. Useless those sobs, those maddening kisses; never again would his eyes smile upon her in life—never his pale lips unclosed to address her. Poor ambitious Huldah!

II.

THE five years have passed—gone with preceding ones to be annexed to the annals of history. In the thatched cabin, nestling sleepily like a witch's abode in the depths of a forest, where the roar of the sea could be plainly heard, knelt a woman—the child, who, five years ago, had entered into that queer compact with Maro Remington. 'Twas the day to witness the consummation of her rash promise. Already daylight was fast verging into dusk. Now and anon came to Huldah's ears the hoot of an owl; only a short time was allotted to her. She knelt before the open window with a face growing colder and whiter with every passing moment. Now, as the time was approximating so swiftly, she began to realize what a foolish thing she had done—sworn to fulfil whatever this man, who was a perfect Shylock for aught she knew, should exact of her. She laughed a horrible blood-curdling laugh; she believed for the moment she was going mad. Up from the floor she started, unable to remain longer in that quiescent condition. Insupportable thoughts were crowding fast upon her; her head was throbbing with direst pain. To and fro she paced, her scarlet shawl slipping from her magnificently-rounded waist, and trailing like a serpent of flame adown her dress of black. Her head ached defiantly; a cruel gleam in her big gray eyes. Grandly beautiful she was, in a peculiar style all her own.

and fantastically had she arrayed herself for the occasion when she was to sacrifice, good God! *what!* A proud dark face, pallid even to ghastliness, save where a line of vivid crimson dashed athwart the clearcut lips; gray eyes, now calm in their expression as a mountain tarn, anon cruel and fierce all splendid as the flames that leap forth from an incendiary's fire; a brow so cabalistically traced over with power that a conqueror could not have sneered at it, crowned with a coronal of dusk braids, more oppressiva still than those belonging to the girl five years ago, looped up, falling down, escaping in tresses all about her as if striving to be released from their fashionable thralldom. They really seemed too heavy for the small regally-turned head they graced. A tall form, willowy yet commanding, draped with black grenadière; barbaric awkward loops of gold swung in her shell-like ears; in the night braids of hair, glowing with the splendor of stars as she moved, were precious stones; and at her throat blazed a carbuncle. Her movements were as easy and graceful as the untamed leopardess of the forest. Indeed, she put you in mind of that beautiful beast now, ready to spring upon and tear and rend into pieces an enemy she feared if—she but had the opportunity. She is the kind of a woman men lose their reason and imperil their lives for—a woman who, in bower or hall, church or mart, must have drawn all men's eyes upon her. Noble, with much of wickedness in her yet. Such is the ward of Remington, who is to meet him to-night to fulfil her word. For five years he has not been out of her thoughts. What will he require of her? Something impossible, or— She could not proceed; the thought was too horrible to entertain.

"But I deserve to be punished," she cried; "for I have entered into a compact such as no sane woman would. Well, I'll keep my word inviolable, for guilty as I am, foolish as I have been, Huldah Brown is still noble enough to regard it in the same light as the Medes and Persians of old did their laws. And why should I complain? My ambition has brought this upon myself. But O, to be the slave of a man; to be obliged to perform his bidding, no matter what! O, what will he exact of me—of me who for the past two years have been the leader of the fashionable world, to whom savans have bent the knee, upon whom

grave metaphysicians have smiled and bestowed much praise? Ah me! 'tis very hard; but I acknowledge 'tis just. My belledom is gone, my palmy days are over, I fear. I may be discrowned, I may be— But no, I'll not pursue the theme. Honor and fame are now mine, but to-night they may be swept from me. I am called the rising star amongst the shining constellations of artists; my paintings are awarded a conspicuous place in the galaxy of art, and I am proud of the honor conferred upon me. To-night I may be stripped of all. Well, every moment the time is drawing nearer, and I'm anxious for it to come. Already the signals, the screams of nocturnal birds, the hoots of owls are heard, and I am arrayed as some Egyptian princess to receive my doom. What'll it be? O what'll it be?"

Than Huldah Brown a prouder woman never lived, and galling it was to her to know that she was obliged to obey her master's behest, no matter what he solicited of her. For two years she had been treading the path that leads to fame—placing on canvas all that pleased her capricious fancy, and she had attained not only distinction but wealth. Still she was miserable. The obligation she was under to Remington gnawed at her heart as the vulture on the liver of Prometheus. Her home was still with Miss Griffin, Remington's aunt, who was much attached to the gifted artist, but only on condition that she would accept every year a certain sum of money, now that she was in a way of earning it, to cover her expenses while an inmate of her house, which the lady unwillingly agreed to. Various and conflicting were her opinions concerning Maro Remington. Now she looked upon him in the light of a satyr, anon she regarded him as her benefactor to whom she owed the enviable position she had won.

Faster fell the shadows; oftener was the scream of bird, the hoot of owl repeated; and Huldah prepared to set out for the trysting-place by the sea. As she opened the door to go out, a fierce blast assailed her; trees shook by it. As she stepped out she noticed a myriad of rebellious clouds lying low in the heavens, and the world grew almost as dark as it was before created. No moon, no star—not a light to guide her on her way. Superstitious, Huldah regarded this as being ominous to her; God was visiting his wrath upon her for the crime

she had been guilty of. But she turned not back. Though the rain came from heaven in a flood, and I knew I was never going to reach my destination, still would I proceed," she muttered. So steadily on she went, firm, unfaltering as Mary Queen of Scots, when she ascended the scaffold to meet her death. Acquainted with the path, her footing was sure; no stumbling, no deviating from it. Fiercer blew the wind, above it she heard the tumultuous roaring of the raging sea; a crash of thunder and glimmer of lightning, and down came the rain. The woman kept her usual pace, however, never slackening, never increasing; each step was as if measured, so near alike were they.

"He said he would be there; if not in body, then in spirit. What if he should be there in his grave-clothes, a corpse! Will he?" Imbued with a tinge of German mysticism, she almost expected to see something not mortal rise up and confront her as she neared the rock—an Egyptian death's head for aught she knew. But no such awful sight greeted her view. Instead, a man, uplifted and great, came from under the shadow of the rock to meet her, pulling her under its ledge.

"You have come," he said, "as you promised. I, too, am here, in body and flesh—a substantial terrestrial being as you perceive, with nothing of the celestial about me. Did you expect me?"

"I did, sir. That you should fail to keep your appointment with me at this place was something too good and mythical for me to entertain for a moment."

"Indeed! But why, thoughtless mortal, come you unprotected against the elements? You are drenched to the very skin. Let me envelop you in this."

He was about to fold about her his heavy travelling shawl, but she stepped back with an air of hauteur, the lightning showing him a scornful face, white as if carved from marble.

"One would judge by your conduct I was freezing. I am hardy, sir, and as accustomed to the cold as a hyperborean. If there be any truth in the metempsychosis of the Orient, I must have been a polar bear in the animal stage of my existence."

Humph! a beautiful pantheress, rather," he sneered. "But we will not argue the point at present, Miss Brown. You cannot stand out here in the storm, crouching under this cavernous rock for shelter, for the

rain drips obliquely downward, and you will be saturated. I noticed a mere apology of a hut squatted a few rods from here, untenanted save by owls and creeping things—a hut occupied probably at no distant day by some miserable family, where we can in a measure be shielded from the wrath of the tempest. We will seek it."

He hurried her forward as he spoke, holding an umbrella he had brought with him over her head, the other hand grasping a lantern which as yet he had not lighted. Into the door of the low-browed hut they passed, he stooping in order to do so. One room with a hard-beaten floor of earth, littered over with hemlock branches; a broken window, through which beat the rain; and in one dim corner, where beetles and long-legged insects struggled for life, was a rickety old settle, the only piece of furniture to be seen. A match had been struck by Remington, and a little ball of fire was now glowing in the darkness, chasing away the shadows and attracting numerous winged things. He motioned Huldah to a seat on the settle, but she declined it with a gesture indicative of contempt.

"Very well," he said, quietly; "I should prefer you to stand. I want to see your face, and as the light is insufficient to penetrate this baffling darkness, I will, with your permission, hold up the lantern and look upon it. Have you gained any beauty in the years that are passed? Do you come up to your expectations?"

"I do. I am more beautiful than any woman I know of."

His *insouciant* manner provoked her beyond endurance, and in turn she wanted to provoke him, and render him disgusted with her. He penetrated her *ruse de guerre*, and smiled inscrutably as he held up the lantern before her mobile face and carefully scrutinized its every lineament, while the storm raged about them, while the rain fell and beat upon the cabin, while the lightning flashed in blinding sheets of brilliancy across the ink-black sky, converting night into day, and making the multitudinous leaves on the trees quiver, and shake, and look as if tipped with flame; while the sea roared, while around them tore the wind as though gone mad, and the thunder boomed like the explosion of cannons. With his right hand steadying aloft the lantern, Maro Remington studied the girl's *bizarre* face till her loveliness wellnigh intoxicated him. Never

had he gazed upon such a face. He drew hard his breath.

"You are right, Huldah; no mortal woman's face can equal yours. 'Tis glorious!"

"Yes, yes," she said, somewhat impatiently, "I know all that. But tell me, Shyllock, why I'm summoned here to-night? What will you have of me? Tell me, tell me quick; I'm burning with impatience."

"Yet for years you have waited seemingly patiently enough. Can you not allay your feverish impatience a few moments, Miss Brown? Whatever my mandate is you are bound to obey, remember."

"Yes," she replied, inexpressible bitterness rippling through her voice, "I understand but too well. As a slave obeys his cruel master, so must I obey you; I am to be perfectly passive in your hands. Is it not so?"

He laughed until his massive frame shook. "It is," he said, coolly; "you have the idea exactly; only, Miss Brown, I do not want you to be the mistress of a seraglio. Now return the compliment, pray, and study my face even as I have studied yours; see what you think of me. I suppose you regard me in the light of a monstrosity?"

Burning with anger, white with rage, with flames leaping from her eyes, yet essaying to mask her true feeling and not let him guess how he provoked her, she did study his face, far different from the face she had once seen; whilst unconcernedly he stood before her, his colossal form drawn up to its mightiest height, the bearded lips parted in a smile that transfigured his swarthy face, the gleam of evil disappeared from his fathomless eyes. Fascinating the woman found it. Breathlessly she studied it, as one might some glorious landscape, or some picture drawn by a master-hand. She forgot herself contemplating it. Fast throbbed her pulse, loud beat her heart, her brain grew dizzy, for—she loved this man—she recognized the power he wielded over her. Now she was conscious that he had been the incentive which spurred her on to fame; that to convince him she was not moulded from ordinary clay she had determined to make herself a name in the world—had made it. But when did her love for him commence?—now, whilst peering in his face beneath the branch-roofed hut—or years ago when he lay down beside the rock? A woman of the world, she controlled herself, and said, icily enough:

"Not at all, sir. *Au contraire*, you appear to me simply what you are, a presumptuously self-reliant, preeminently handsome, unprincipled man, a villain a truer woman might correctly term you."

"The dickens! What authority have you for applying that infamous epithet to me, Miss Brown? Why am I a villain?"

"Otherwise you would not have taken a mere child at her word, and bound her by a promise she would loathe to fulfil. What is it? *O, what is it?* I can't and won't wait longer! I must hear it now! what do you require of me?"

She was kneeling supplicatingly at his feet, white hands and whiter face uplifted, this haughty young thing whose scorn many a man had felt, the scarlet shawl twisting a serpent of fire down her dismal dress of black.

The sea cried and shrieked as if in pain; the wind howled like a pack of famishing wolves, causing the trees under its fell influence to writhe as Laocoon in the folds of reptiles; above it the man's voice rose full of pity.

"Rise, Miss Brown," he said; "do not desecrate yourself thus by kneeling to mortal man. Reserve that act of homage for Deity alone. I require nothing at your hands."

He attempted to lift her up, but she rejected his proffered help, and sprang to her feet, erect. "Nothing, nothing! I do not comprehend. Do I hear aright? *Nothing*, Mr. Remington?"

Dazed-like she repeated the words. As one under the influence of a narcotic she heard them, yet could not take in their meaning.

"Nothing, Miss Brown," he reiterated. "Now I'll tell you what plan I concocted in reference to you when we stood near this spot five years ago. I'll show you what a diabolical man I was then. Girl, at that time I was a married man—entrapped into marriage by a woman beautiful as a Venus, guileful as a Messalina, who sullied by her conduct the unblemished escutcheon of Remington. I expostulated with her in vain. Fond of adulation and the men, she flirted outrageously, and I left her, making over to her a fortune sufficiently large to allow her to continue her reckless mode of living—to keep up her lavish expenditures. There was no divorce. I could not harbor the idea of dragging my unhappiness into

count although she was disgracing my name more and more with every passing day. Besides, I do not believe in divorces. If I had procured one I should not have considered myself any freer than when shackled with the marriage-tie. But enough. I came here to the sea, hoping to find rest. Sitting one day listening to the singing of the waters, you attracted me by your uniqueness, and the way in which you spoke to the waves, as if they were human beings that could sympathize with you in your bitterness. Then forth from your lips burst a string of denunciations against fate, poverty and your sedentary life. I immediately conceived the idea of adopting you, and, when old enough, making you my wife. There, don't start so violently. You have no reason to be afraid of me now. Be quiet. Other men have committed polygamy, and never been discovered; why not I? I meant to be true to you, meant to transplant you to a fairer clime, where never a breath of infamy should reach you. I trusted you would love me, if only from a sense of gratitude. Do you despise me, Huldah?"

"People do not customarily despise their benefactor, from whom accrues the boon they covet; neither do they always love him for having it in his power to confer benefits upon them," she returned, evasively. O the concentrated bitterness and scorn in her voice, despite the fact that she pitied him as she had never pitied being before.

He went on as if there had been no digression. "I meant to look out that no interruption should occur at our wedding, as at the nuptials of Rochester and Jane Eyre. Rebellious as you were, I recognized in you something noble, after all. Two years swept by on leaden wings. My wife died. 'Twould be mockery to say I mourned her death. I rejoiced rather—the impediment in my way was removed; the clog that dragged me downward gone. Another year passed. I fell sick, nigh unto death. For weeks my life was despaired of, and lying at death's door I had time and cause to view the misdeeds of my life. I was overwhelmed with shame; I learnt how wickedly I was acting towards you. I repented, and rose from my bed of sickness a well and better man. Yet I could not bring myself to release you from your word, or my aunt from the vow I made her take never to entertain you with a page of my life's history. Has she?"

"She has been still as death on that point, cruel and secret as the grave. She has never mentioned your name to me in all the years dead and gone."

"And in all that time I never heard of you. I returned to Boston three days ago. The city was ringing your praises—you were the belle, the rage; sought after by all; a rising star amongst artists. I have seen some of your pictures. You have wonderful genius, Huldah."

She responded not; indeed, if she had wanted to she could not have spoken; an iron hand seemed grasping at her throat.

Silence fell between them. Fiercer blazed the lightning, faster rattled down the rain-drops, while the uncanny wind and the roaring thunder made the night fearful to the last degree.

Instinctively, Remington drew nearer the woman who attracted him.

"This terrible storm, Huldah—does it not frighten you?"

"Frighten me!" she laughed; "I love it. Since I was a wee tottling child I have worshipped it—listened to it as I do now to the sublime rhythm of a Miltonic poem. The lightning seems His smile, the thunder His voice. Have you any suggestions further to advance, Mr. Remington?"

"Only this, Huldah. You are released from your promise; you are free. Not but that I am selfish enough to wish I might take the idol of Boston in my arms as my wife, but I want no unwilling woman for my mistress. Yet I love you, unfeeling supercilious girl; I adore you for the nameless something clinging to you, making you different from other women. You have no respect for me, Huldah?" he pleaded.

"None, sir. How can I, after your confession? You would have treated me infamously if you had not repented. I despise you!"

He groaned. "It is but—just, my punishment," he said, in a voice wailing as the crying wind, not knowing she spoke falsely, that she respected him far more since his confession than before, now recognizing the noble soul prisoned in him; only it hurt her pride, her innate sense of honor, to know he would have done her an irretrievable wrong—this man she loved, who loved her, and who, forgetting himself, flung his arms about her, kissing her once, kissing her many times.

"Thanks," she said, indignantly, as he

released her; "you are a gentleman!"

He took no notice of this stinging taunt. Baring his white forehead reverently, as a *preux chevalier* might have done in those chivalric days of old when parting with his lady-love, he said, humbly enough:

"Forgive me, Huldah; I forgot myself. Now that our interview is ended, shall I see you to the place where you are stopping? The rain is ceasing to fall."

"No, thanks; I am not afraid, and prefer the companionship of my own thoughts to your company. I am staying alone in the cabin where grandfather died."

"And I have taken up my quarters at H— by the sea. Well, as you refuse my escort, accept the use of my travelling shawl, umbrella and lantern; otherwise," as she hesitated, "I shall follow you home."

As there was no other alternative, she consented; and with one lingering impassioned look at the bewildering face, with its mobile mouth, he bowed low, and went forth in the night.

III.

ONE cold autumnal day Huldah rose from her easel, her task finished at last. All might come and see it now—she was ready. They came; artists, lovers of art, and mere society people, all prepared to criticise; and with the rest came Maro Remington. Greedily they gathered round the picture, all but Remington, who stood aloof till the crowd, growing denser each moment, should begin to thin. This is what they saw: A stretch of crag-beaten shore, with white-crested waves lapping it, over which shone a cloudless sky, with a ball of fire sinking in the distance. Strewn over the shore were peaked and jagged rocks, upon one of which sat perched a lonely seabird, its head turned in the direction of the sea. Brown-bodied pines and scraggy shrubs were in the background, and down by the side of a black boulder, with torn and fretted sides, under the shadow of its precipitous ledge, with grotesque shadows photographing hieroglyphics at their feet, were the two figures that gave life to the painting. A child, a girl with berry-brown face, sat upon the ground, her brown frock not lengthly enough to hide the naked arched feet, over which the thundering spray was pattering, handfuls of alga scattered over her lap. Her head was bare,

without covering, save for the snaky black locks that fell in blinding folds about her face, straying thence to the whitened ground. Her eyes! ah, they burned beneath her curling lashes like campfires as they gazed with passionate longing, with maddening love, into the face of the man reclining at her feet, his colossal head resting upon his doubled-up gigantic arm. A man with the frame of a Hercules—sinewy and grand—with the swarthiest, most powerful face one can imagine, with bearded mouth, and lofty brow, and eyes in whose fascinating depths dwelt the least perceptible gleam of evil. Entrancing the gazers found it, reading in it something more than a mere picture placed there on exhibition. 'Twas the history of a girl's heart laid bare, with her soul revealed. Long, long they gazed, recognizing in the prostrate figure and passionate face, Maro Remington; but that uncanny creature—the Naiad of the surf—who, *who* was she? Two or three imagined they detected a resemblance in that barefooted weird child to the artist who had drawn it, but their hearers laughed to scorn the idea of comparing her to the elegant world-renowned Miss Brown.

The crowd ebbed at last—slowly Huldah's admirers and detractors moved down the steps. Maro Remington stalked out from the shadows up to the picture, before which stood his quondam ward.

"Huldah!"

A face chilling as Greenland snows, with never a bit of warmth in the perfect lips, she turned upon him, two or three black locks which had stolen loose from their golden fillet, fluttering about her.

"Well!" That one interjection, nothing more.

"What am I to understand from this picture?" he asked, watching her intently.

"The truth." And a smile chill and radiant as the aurora borealis trembled across her lips, vanished altogether.

Something like hope crept into his eyes. "And what is the truth, Huldah?"

"Can you not read it," she said, a trifle impatiently, "when it is written in the child's eyes—when her very face proclaims it? Is not the painting lifelike enough?"

"Ay, so lifelike it almost speaks. Is that which looks passionately out of the child's eyes love for the lone man at her feet?"

She did not flush, neither did she pale, for that would have been impossible; her

face was white, white as the blossoms of the Guelder-rose; but she trembled—trembled like a fragile exotic before a chilling blast. Yet she answered, steadily:

"It is—love in its deepest sense."

"O Huldah, is it possible, and will you be my wife?" He came a step nearer, and would have enfolded her in his arms, but she recoiled from him in consternation.

"O Maro—Mr. Remington, do not ask me that. I'm not worthy to be called your wife now; and—and I did not mean to force that declaration from you. I only meant to humiliate myself to the dust because—because I treated you the other night as if you were not a human being—as if you were devoid of sensitiveness. 'Tis your turn to scorn me now. I love you, unwomanly as it is for me to tell you so, but—but do not ask me to be your wife out of pity. I couldn't bear that!'

"Neither, Huldah, do I ask you out of pity. I ask you because I cannot live without you. Is it yes or no, Huldah?"

He held out his arms, and she, as any other woman in the same circumstances would have done, entered them and was clasped in a fervent embrace.

"It is yes, Maro—my Maro."

He bent his kingly head over the woman in his arms, and a shower of kisses fell upon the white face, which flushed under

his ardent caresses a burning scarlet. Happiness shone in her eyes.

"O Maro," she said, brokenly, "I am so ashamed of my conduct toward you the other night! But my pride was touched, and I could not help saying those bitter words, though all the while I loved you. You have not been out of my thoughts for five years. How could you, when you did so much for me—when you even cared for poor dead grandfather, and erected a monument at the head of his forest grave? O, I have so much to thank you for—Maro, dear Maro!"

The haughty girl's pride was strangely humbled; love, more potent than aught else in the world, had conquered her.

"Nay, Huldah, 'tis I who should seek forgiveness instead. I intended doing you a wrong if God in his providence had not ordered otherwise. Let us give thanks to whom thanks are due for bringing matters to such a joyful crisis. Morning, noon and night let us remember him. Here in this spot, now, let us thank Heaven."

And together they knelt at the foot of the painting, his arm thrown around her caressingly, one beautiful ray of sunshine drifting in and resting on their bowed head-, as they poured forth their souls in praise to him who had been so kind to them.

HUNTING FOR AN IDEAL.

BY WILLIAM H. BUSHNELL.

"No girl will ever have a chance to marry me for my money. I'll take good care of that. When I wed there shall be nothing but the most disinterested affection thrown into the scale, — no ideas of a grand home and carriages and opera-boxes and fashionable parties and rich dresses and diamonds, and all that sort of thing." And Charley Marshall tossed his half-finished cigar out of the window, and added, with emphasis, "Not the girl I make wife will have to love me for myself alone, — take me without the slightest idea of future ease; be content with the anticipation of 'love in a cottage,' and the prospect of having to prove a 'helpmeet' in fact as well as in name."

"That is, cook, sweep, wash dishes, scrub the floors, and all other drudgery," added Fred Tryan, with a peculiarly expressive whistle.

"Certainly. That's just what I mean."

"And you expect to find such a girl in this blemished, bediamonded age, Charley?"

"Why not?"

"I thought they had all died out with our grandmothers. Matrimony now-a-days is a very different thing from a century or two ago. The homespun age has given place to one of satin-work and frivolity. It's a mighty hazardous undertaking to marry. Women are daily driving poor fellows to bankruptcy and the dogs; and the salary that a few years since would have been ample for household expenses would n't now pay the rent."

"You are cynical, Fred."

"A trifle, perhaps; but that does n't alter the facts of the case. It is different with you who have plenty, — are one of the 'bloated bondholders.' How I wish I was! But what in the name of common sense would I do getting married with only a couple of thousands a year?"

"Do well enough if you marry the right kind of a woman, and train her properly in the beginning."

"As how?" with a dubious smile.

"As I intend to do. I have told you that no one shall marry me for money. The girl shall consider me poor, — look upon her

future in that light, — and after the ceremony I shall take her to a plain country home, and test her well before revealing that her lot is to be otherwise."

"What if she rebels?"

"No danger of that. With my forethought I shall not be likely to be deceived."

"But, if after your chrysalis puts on the gorgeous garments of the butterfly, what if she should spread her wings and revel in the surrounding splendor? In other words, what if the uplifting from poverty to riches should make her giddy and wild? The change from a country girl to a city belle is very great, and has turned the head of many an one."

"Granted; but I shall guard against such a thing."

"Educate her up!" laughed Fred. "Well, I wish you success. But where do you expect to find such a paragon of loveliness (for with your æsthetic tastes you would never marry any but a beautiful woman) and good sense and pronounced character? Certainly not in the city?"

"I can scarcely endorse such a sweeping denunciation. Yet I intend to look about in the country."

"Among the green valleys and 'forests primeval'! I wonder how 'Priscilla,' the meek and loving, would have stood such an exaltation? and whether 'Miles' would have believed in your theory?" And Fred laughed heartily as he thought of the stern Puritan captain and his quaint ideas of courtship, — his

"Steady, straightforward, and strong, with irresistible logic:

Orthodox, flashing conviction right into the hearts of the heathen."

"You can make merry as much as you please," answered his friend; "but this is no idle whim of mine. I have reflected upon it long, perfected my plan, and intend to carry it out to the very letter."

"Bon voyage then, and I hope you will not meet with shipwreck. But promise me one thing."

"If it is within reason."

"That you will train your rustic divinity to love cigars, so that I may come and see you sometimes, sit with my legs under your mahogany, have a good old-fashioned smoke, and gaze upon the delicious wonder of the nineteenth century!"

"You will be welcome at any time."

"One thing more. Have it one of the marriage vows, Charley, that the divinity shall never eat onions!" And Fred Tryan departed laughing, though not until he had promised to faithfully keep the plans of his friend a profound secret.

The proposed delusion in his marriage (whenever it should occur) had become a pet scheme with Marshall. He had given it much thought, and flattered himself there could be no miscarriage. Certainly if a girl loved him as she ought, she would be content to dwell with him in a humble abode, and minister to his comfort.

In fact, his "Castle in Spain" was already builded, — everything perfect excepting the perfect woman who was to become the satin of the inner shrine. She was yet to be found, and he resolved to no longer delay. Had it not been for the conversation with his friend, he would have continued dreaming as before, for he was naturally dilatory. But the only half-hidden sneers of his friend had stung deeper than he had at first been aware, and roused him to immediate action.

"I will commence my search tomorrow," he said, resolutely; "and before a year has passed will show Mr. Fred Tryan and the rest of mankind a model wife, — one whose only love is her husband; who accepted poverty with him, and when given riches and position and influence was not unduly exalted. He quoted Miles Standish. So can I, and to the purpose; for I shall astonish his critical eyes with

"She, the Puritan girl, in the solitude of the forest,

Making the humble house and the modest apparel of homespun

Beautiful with her beauty, and rich with the wealth of her being."

"Aha, Mr. Fred! I think I shall have you upon the hip then."

A few days enabled Marshall to finally arrange all his matters to his satisfaction, and he disappeared from the city, no one but his friend knowing whither he had gone; even his own family little dreaming that he had set out upon such a Quixotic mission,

— had indeed undertaken to find a perfect woman.

Partially disguised, and under an assumed name, he journeyed hither and thither, looking for the thornless rose, the diamond without a flaw, the pearl without a speck. But disappointment met him at every turn. Girls of all kinds, golden, Auburn, and raven-haired, arose before him like daisies in the meadow, — a perfect bouquet of loveliness. But, alas! there was an indescribable something lacking, — the rare combination of mind and physical proportion that was to insure him happiness, make the humble and wealthy home alike happy, — to stand the severe test of both poverty and riches.

Any ordinary mortal would have been satisfied with the choice offered; could from out such a bevy of beauty have selected scores that would indeed have been "a jewel in the crown of her husband." But he was very hard to please. His ideal was altogether too high for human nature to fill. At least he found none that satisfied him, and, after a long search, was about to return home, rest, and take a new departure for foreign lands, when accident caused him to be delayed in the picturesque little village of Ferndell.

The breaking down of the stage landed him, in the midst of a violent storm, in front of a large farmhouse, the surroundings of which indicated unusual thrift.

"Who lives here?" he asked of the driver, who had informed him that it would be some hours before they could proceed.

"Zenas Patridge, one of the richest men in the county," was answered.

"I shall have to trespass upon his hospitality. Anything would be better than remaining in this miserable old conveyance, through the roof of which the water passes like a sieve."

"Yes, it am a better dry-weather stage," laughed the driver. "But go right in. Squire Patridge will be glad to see you. He is one of the most friendly kind of men. Besides," and the laugh grew broader, "there's the prettiest kind of a girl in there, and I guess the time won't hang very heavy on your hands."

"A pretty girl!" and Marshall looked dismayed at his wet and mud-splashed wardrobe.

"That ha'n't nothing," replied the friendly Jehu, reading the expression of his

face. "She ha'n't one of the stuck-up kind, but just as good and clever as she is handsome."

Thinking what a fool he was to have been standing even thus long in the rain, Marshall made his way through the closely mowed and cleanly kept door-yard, along the path fringed with flowers, and knocked at the door. It was opened with little delay, though his quick ear caught the rustle of feminine skirts, and he was satisfied he had already been inspected, and most probably by the "pretty girl" herself.

"Walk in, — walk right in," was the welcome he received, and the broad palm of Zenas Partridge closed upon his own, and emphasized the hospitable reception.

"Thank you, sir. I shall be grateful for shelter for a time, — until the stage is repaired," replied Marshall.

"And that won't be tonight," said his host. "They are slower than molasses in a cold cellar on a January morning."

"But I cannot think of trespassing upon your kindness for so long a time, sir."

"There, there! Don't mention it. My wife and Lena will be only too happy to have your company."

"Lena, — your daughter?"

"No; haven't chick or child in the world. Lena — Eleanor is the right name — is a niece, and — Well, you'll have a chance to see for yourself."

Eleanor Rivington, as she appeared at the supper-table, was nearer the beau ideal of Marshall than any he had ever seen. She was a sparkling beauty; could not have been called either brunette or blonde, but partook of the best characteristics of both; was a happy medium type, fair, not tall in height, and of well-rounded proportions, with dainty feet and hands, the latter just tinged enough with labor to show that she was not unfamiliar with it. Her eyes were of a peculiar soft grayish hazel; her hair a mass of golden braids; her lips delicately cleft, and red as the ripe clover-blossom; her nose and chin exquisitely cut, and there was the charm of perfectly graceful, lady-like self-possession and culture in her movements, albeit her dress was of the simplest in texture and fashion.

To say that Marshall was delighted with the vision was simply less than the truth. And he found, as the evening passed, that her mind was well stored by reading; that she possessed a rich and trained voice, and

played and sang in a manner he had seldom heard equalled. In fact she grew in his dreams to be the paragon of loveliness and worth he had so often pictured; and when detained the next day, he poured out (by letter) to his friend Fred Tryan a glowing description, and predicted that at last the spotless pearl he had so long been in search of had been found.

If Cupid had made especial terms with Jupiter Pluvius the matter could not have been better arranged. Such a storm as raged had not been known even by that ubiquitous individual, "the oldest inhabitant." Streams were flooded, and bridges carried away, and all travel stopped. The old stage still remained unrepaired by the wayside, and Marshall was kept within doors, feasting upon delicacies, and passing the time reading to Lena, and hearing her sing, or conversing with her.

And naturally, as they became acquainted, they talked of themselves, and he hinted at his peculiar ideas with regard to married life; that when he married the beginning would be in a small way, — a humble home; and that while he was willing to toil for the woman he loved, it might be necessary for her to take up her share of the burdens.

The beautiful girl met him half way, — did not seem averse to "love in a cottage," seemed to consider it would be a pleasure to contribute to the making of a home; and some dainty dishes from her own fair hands was proof positive to him that she was versed in the culinary art.

The storm ceased at last, and they parted. No words of love had been spoken, but the touch of hands and the glancing of eyes and the tell-tale blood had given full promise of what would be, even as the rosy tints of morning tell of the golden glory of noon-day. Of what Marshall thought his words to Tryan told the entire story.

"She is as beautiful and good as an angel, Fred. The most perfect being both in mind and body."

"And will cook you pork and beans and do up your shirts with smiles?" was the quizzical question.

"Without doubt. Oh, such dishes as she can prepare! They are food for the gods."

"Apples of the Hesperides, sweetened with nectar and ambrosia! But of course she knows of your wealth?"

"Has not an inkling. In fact she does not even know my name, — thinks it is

Charley Marsh, and that I have to depend upon business for a livelihood."

"The name of the goddess, Charley?"

"Eleanor Rivington."

"Ah! A romantic name. When is she to change it?"

"That is undecided as yet. I have not even whispered of my devotion."

"But intend to do so very soon?"

"At the earliest practicable moment."

With such a commencement as had been made the growth of love could not have been otherwise than rapid. The visits of Marshall to Ferndell grew frequent, became more and more lengthy; and, one evening when the moon sailed as a silver boat over the lightest waves of clouds, the fond vows were whispered, and two hearts pledged to beat as one for all time; soft hand was clasped in broader palm, and burning lip was pressed to lip in the first long passionate kiss of betrothal.

Fred Tryan laughed a cynical laugh when he heard of the engagement. Something in the matter seemed to amuse him very much. Yet he congratulated his friend warmly upon his choice, and wished him all the happiness he anticipated.

And for once love seemed to run a broad, deep, untroubled river, with nothing to mar the smoothness of its course. The wedding-day was a glorious one, golden with sunshine, with only rosy clouds; without even the slightest premonition of future storms; a day of perfect June, when

"The sky was all blushes, the earth was all bliss,

And the prayer of each heart, 'Be the ending like this.'"

The wedding feast finished, Marshall took his bride in the conveyance he had provided, and carried her to what he led her to believe was her future home. The journey ended, they stopped at a small cottage in the

outskirts of a manufacturing town. It was scarcely more than comfortably furnished, the surroundings not attractive, and only such as a bride in the most humble circumstances would have been contented with.

But the young wife took up her lot cheerfully. She went around singing all the day long, brightened up every room with tasteful womanly touches, — always had meals ready upon the return of her husband, — and seemed to enjoy what well might have been called "playing at housekeeping;" and even objected when her husband proposed to employ a girl to do the drudgery.

But if it was fun for her, it was not for him. He had nothing to do, and soon grew tired of "loafing" around the little village, killing time so as to make his wife believe he was hard at work. The months he had intended to be passed in this manner dwindled into two short weeks. He could endure it no longer; and, having made the necessary preparations (through his friend Fred Tryan) he determined to move to the city and his true sphere in life.

Money smoothes most ways as it did his, and a few days later he escorted his bride into a "brown-stone front," exquisitely furnished; told Lena it was hers, and that he had deceived her, as he was rich.

"No, Charley," she answered, with rippling laughter. "No, Charley, dear, you have been simply deceiving yourself. I knew you all the time. My cousin Fred Tryan had pointed you out to me, and told me all about you."

"The dev" —

"Hush!" and she kissed him into silence.

"But I won't make you any the less a good wife, dear."

She hasn't, though she has cured him of many foolish notions of mortals being perfect; and he has learned to rejoice that his Quixotic quest resulted so well and happily, when the chances were as a thousand to one against anything but disappointment.

IN A TIGHT PLACE.

BY W. H. MACY.

We had been very successful in the old "Phaeton," on the "off-shore" and Archer grounds, but when, deeply laden with sperm oil, we crowded sail upon her, bound to Valparaiso, we were obliged to keep the pumps going all the way into port. Here a survey was called upon her, and the united wisdom of three practical men decided that her time-worn and battered frame was unseaworthy for the long voyage round Cape Horn.

So there was nothing better to be done than to sell both ship and cargo for the benefit of all concerned; and this we were able to do to good advantage. The oil brought a good price; and, after it had all been discharged and sent ashore, the ship, as she lay at her anchor, was sold separately.

We were all discharged, and paid off in gold, and my earnings, as chief mate of the ship, amounted to a handsome sum. This was paid over to me by the captain, in the counting-room of Messrs. Nye & Co., who were acting as his business agents. Mr. Gifford, the second mate, was present, and was paid off at the same time. As the captain was counting down the gold pieces to us, he said, —

"I have sold the old 'Phaeton' better than I expected, and she brought a good round sum for a condemned ship. But the old Chileno who has bought her knows what he is about; and, if he employs her down on the lee coast, in moderate weather and trade winds, there's some years of wear and tear left in the old barque yet, though she is hardly fit to encounter Cape Horn. He is going to send a gang on board tomorrow to take charge of her; but I suppose you and Mr. Gifford will want to take your traps ashore tonight, as all the rest are leaving."

"I'm not in a hurry," I answered. "I would as soon sleep on board tonight as not. What do you say, Mr. Gifford? I guess you and I can take care of the old 'Phaeton' one more night, can't we?"

"Oh, yes," said the second officer. "I am quite willing, for I don't care about moving my traps ashore until morning. I

guess she won't run away with us before daylight."

"But what'll you do with all this money? You want to leave it here locked up in the safe, don't you?" inquired a clerk who was standing at a desk near us.

"No, sir," said I. "I'll take it with me, and put it into my own chest. Wherever we go, our property goes with us, — eh, Mr. Gifford?"

"Certainly," answered my shipmate. "We'll take good care of it, too, I reckon."

The clerk stared in astonishment, and well he might, for it was, as I can now understand much better than I then could, a very foolish course of proceeding on our part. It was not at all prudent or business-like, but it was seaman-like, and that was all we cared for. As for Captain Manchester, he did not seem at all surprised at our decision, and would probably have done the same thing himself when a younger man.

We had between us about three thousand dollars, my own bag being much the heavier of the two. As we came out of the counting-room, we passed a quiet-looking Chileno, with a peculiar limp in his gait, who was carrying a bundle of some sort of merchandise across the main room of the store, but took no special notice of him aside from the fact of his lameness. He was, no doubt, a porter or laborer employed about the premises.

We had no reason to suppose that this fellow understood a word of English, and I did not, as the narrators of such incidents generally do, observe his dull eyes to glisten as they lighted upon the little bags containing the gold ounces. We had but a few steps to go to the pier where our boat was waiting to row us off to the old "Phaeton." The few men of her old crew still on duty were in high spirits, for they were all to be discharged and paid off that very afternoon. As soon as we got on board, I gave the word that all were released from further duty, and might consider their voyage at an end. Shore boats were ready and waiting for their passengers, and, as Jack's inven-

tory of movables at the end of a long cruise is not very extensive, the second mate and I, with our precious little bags, were soon left in quiet possession. The "Phaeton" lay well out in the bay, having only her best bower anchor down in full thirty fathoms of water, but the second anchor was ready for letting go in case it should be needed, which was not at all likely. The Bay of Valparaiso, although of too great depth for convenience in anchoring and getting under way, is safe enough except in case of a northerly gale blowing in; of which at that moment there was no danger. It was not so strange, after all, that two young and resolute seamen should feel themselves a competent garrison for an almost empty ship lying in a snug harbor. As to the chance of being attacked for purposes of robbery because we had the money with us, I believe we had scarcely given the subject a thought; but we intended to stand watch, and watch as became honest seamen with a ship under their charge.

We got our supper, and, setting a black bottle on the table between us, lighted our pipes, and prepared for a quiet evening's chat, — perhaps the last that we should ever enjoy together as shipmates. There seemed to be a sort of fellowship in the very presence of that black bottle, whether it contained anything or not. I drank very little myself, and had no fears of my companion in that respect, knowing him to be even more abstemious than myself. After a single glass apiece, our conversation turned upon future intentions and prospects, as the next day was to see us turned adrift in a foreign port. I had made up my mind to get a passage home in the first vessel that I could find bound to any American port, but Mr. Gifford thought of shipping in another whaler, having already been offered a chief mate's berth, and trying his luck on another cruise in the Pacific.

"But what are you going to do with all your money?" I asked.

"Send it home, — or at any rate the greater part of it. I suppose you'll take charge of it, won't you? Put it right in with yours, and make one job of it."

He was perfectly serious in the matter, and I presume the honest young fellow would not have thought of even taking a receipt from me. But I was a little older than he, and had just a trifle more worldly wisdom.

"I don't think I should want to risk taking your money, or my own either. In its present shape," said I. "These bags are too handy for a thief; and, as I should go on board a strange vessel, there's no knowing who my shipmates might be. I suppose there is a way of doing it, by putting the money into the hands of Nye & Co., or somebody else in their line of life, and taking a little piece of paper that will make anybody else pay it to you when you get home."

"Yes; but what if I am not going home?" put in the second mate, with the air of one who feels himself pretty sharp in money matters. "I may not get home for some years, if at all."

"Well, I suppose you can have that bit of paper written so as to have the money paid to your brother, or some other friend at home. It's what they call a draft or a check or something of the sort, but I confess I don't know much more about that kind of business than you do; though I mean to inquire into it after I get ashore, and then decide what I had better do with all this money."

"Take it along with you," said Mr. Gifford dogmatically, "and mine too, just as 't is, all in gold ounces. I don't know much about those pieces of paper, whatever they may be called, and I have n't any faith in 'em. Now that young fellow in the store there today acted as if he thought we were green to take this money off here with us. But I feel a good deal safer to have the yellow bags here where I can put my hand on 'em, than to have any piece of paper with Nye & Co.'s flourishing signature at the bottom of it. Now don't you?"

I did not at once answer his question, for I had been thinking, and had my doubts. After a rather long pause, I said, pursuing the subject now running in my thoughts, —

"Mr. Gifford, suppose anybody should attack us here tonight to get this money from us, what should we do?"

"Do! Why, fight for it, of course. But who would be likely to rob us out here in the harbor?"

"Why, some one who saw us receive this gold, or had seen us bringing the bags down to the boat," I replied, "or even some of our own shipmates who left us today. Not that I suspect any one in particular. But suppose a number of men should come, —

enough to be more than a match for us two, — what then?"

"Fight," he answered, as coolly and unconcernedly as if he had said "eat" instead. "But with this old ship under us, light and high out of water, we have the advantage of a dozen men in a boat, unless we let 'em take us by surprise, and board us in the dark; which I don't think either you or I will do. But I reckon there is n't more than one chance in a thousand of anybody coming off here tonight to board and rob an empty ship."

"Well, I hope there is n't," I answered doubtfully. "But it will be well enough to keep a sharp look-out."

"Of course," said Gifford: "that's a good seaman's rule always and everywhere. We shall set the watch at ten o'clock, and until that time we shall both be stirring. Now I think of it, it was this evening at eight o'clock that I promised to meet Captain Dayton on board the 'Adelaide,' and I suppose I must go. As she lies further in shore, I'll take the small boat and scull across to her. I shall be back before nine; and, if I should close a bargain with Captain Dayton, I can take my chest and traps right aboard in the morning without landing them on shore."

I had no objections to offer. It was quite important that he should be prompt at the time appointed, for upon this might depend his getting a very desirable situation as chief mate of the "Adelaide." Besides, I thought just as he did, that there was no great need of vigilance at this early hour: after ten o'clock, I meant that we should not both be caught napping at the same time. As the bell on board the British man-of-war had already struck "seven-bells," or half-past seven o'clock, we went on deck, and my active young shipmate, hauling up the small boat which had been towing astern, jumped into her, and sculled away into the darkness.

I walked the deck for a few minutes after he had gone, and went forward to look out over the bows. The night was calm and still, but quite dark, and, as the old ship headed southward toward the town, a number of lights on the shore were visible. But all was silent as the grave after Mr. Gifford's little boat had gone out of hearing distance, and I turned aft again, with a feeling like that of Selkirk, — "monarch of all I surveyed."

I went below again, took a book from my chest, and tried to read, but could not fix my mind upon the subject. A feeling of sadness stole over me as I thought of bidding a final farewell to the old "Phaeton;" glancing around the old familiar cabin in which I had lived for nearly three years, every object now half-obscured in the dim light of the little "petticoat" oil-lamp which stood on the table, my thoughts wandered away into a reverie, from which I was roused by the sound of one stroke on the man-of-war's bell, marking half-past eight o'clock. I arose, and went up into the open air again. There was no change in the weather save that it seemed a little darker than before, and all was silent as a tomb. It was rather soon to look for my comrade's return, and, after a careful survey in every direction, I went below again, but could not read. I walked back and forth in the confined space, which afforded room for only a few steps, and, as the minutes passed, I grew nervous and fidgety. What could have kept the second mate so long?

Two bells! It was indeed nine o'clock, and no sound of the returning boat! I went on deck once more, and, as I stepped out of the companion-way, I saw in the gloom a human form move near the main-mast, and disappear in range of the mast, as if dodging from view. The first thought was that my partner had come on board: *but why should he be so silent about it?*

My vision now pierced the darkness better than at first, and I saw another figure move into view from behind the mast. That step! There could be no other like it, for the limp was peculiar. Like a flash of lightning, I understood the whole situation. It was the quiet porter whom I had seen at work in Nye & Co.'s store, and he was not alone! I descended the cabin stairs with a single leap, rushed into the after-cabin, and locked the door on the inside. With a single puff, I strangled the light, leaving the place in total darkness. By that time, my assailants were coming down the cabin stairs, having thrown off all concealment, and, thundering away at the cabin door, demanded admittance. I gathered from the steps and voices that there were three in number, and were all barefoot, which accounted for their having moved so silently above deck. But they all talked freely enough now, and in a loud tone, as if they

meant to carry their point by intimidation. I was but an indifferent Spanish scholar, but I understood their threats,—that if they were not let in, they would break their way in, and cut my throat. My wits never seemed to move so quickly as at that moment, yet I must say that I was not driven to my wits' ends. Indeed, I seemed, after a minute had elapsed, to feel a fierce delight in the situation, and determined to sell my life as dearly as possible. As for the money, I swore in my heart that they should never have it, whether I came through dead or alive, for I would drop it thirty fathoms deep to the bottom of the bay. So I tossed the two bags of gold upon the upper transom, close by the stern window, which was open. I now bethought me of a ruse which I hoped might operate in my favor. I sang out gruffly, "Mr. Gifford!" and then, putting my head inside a state-room door, I answered myself in the lazy voice of one just awakening. The kicks and blows on the door desisted for a moment, as the Chilenos listened to my ventriloquial dialogue, and then I gathered from their words that they understood there were two of us.

"I knew all the time that there were two," said a voice which I called that of the lame porter. Of course he knew it.

"Why did n't you tell us so?" inquired the other voice angrily.

"If I had, you would have been afraid to come," was the answer.

By their speech, I judged that they were all well charged with *aguardiente*; but two of them were much cooled in their courage by having ascertained, as they supposed, that there were two of us inside the cabin. They now retired a little, to consult upon the plan of attack, which gave me a breathing spell, and time to make my arrangements with more deliberation.

I had an old-fashioned single-barreled pistol in my chest which was loaded and capped (revolvers were not so common in those days as now), but I found that I had no ammunition to reload it, so I must trust to it as it was, though the charge had been in it several days. There was nothing else in the bare cabin that could be used as a weapon, unless it were the chairs in which I had sat. I determined to climb up in the upper transom, close by the stern window, and there await the attack, defending myself as best I could. If too hard pressed, I would, as a last resort, drop the bags of

money into the sea, and dive after them myself, taking my chance by swimming, though it was quite a long distance to reach any other vessel.

I heard the robbers overhead reconnoitring, but the only cabin skylight in this old ship was a stout little hatch of plank, suited to heavy weather, with a couple of little deck-lights of thick glass set into it, and the whole securely fastened underneath. They soon abandoned that avenue of attack, and, having apparently fortified their courage with more liquor, returned to the original plan. The cabin door was very strong, and had thus far withstood all their pushing and kicking; but they now found and brought down a couple of hand-spikes to be used as rams, and my heart sank within me as I heard the first blow delivered against the door, for I perceived that it must soon yield to this manner of attack, if it were continued.

I must defend myself and the bags as long as I could, but I could only get a single shot with the pistol, and then trust to circumstances. But where, oh! where was Mr. Gifford?

Suddenly a bright idea occurred to me, which I hastened to carry out, for the hand-spike blows were weakening the door, and the crisis was close at hand.

The run-scuttle of the old "Phaeton" was of large size, and was right in the middle of the cabin floor, under the table. In an instant I had pushed the table off to the port side, lifted the scuttle by the ring, leaving the hatchway open. I thought of jumping down there, taking the money with me, and so making my way into the hold; but at that instant I remembered that we had, only a short time before, built a strong bulk-head across, just abaft the mizzen-main, to prevent the crew from getting at the rum and tobacco which had been stored in the run. The place was a *cul de sac*, and I should be brought to bay in a still tighter place than the upper cabin.

I had another new idea, which seemed like an inspiration. I jerked the coarse brown cloth from the table, and, stooping, laid it carefully over the scuttle, completely covering the hole, and overlapping far enough to hold itself in place. Here was a trap which might perhaps catch the foremost of the assailants,—especially as they were not seamen, and would not be upon the look-out for the hole under their feet.

Crash! The door was on the point of giving way, and I leaped upon the upper transom, pulling the bags of gold close to my side, and cocked my pistol, with an inward prayer that it might not miss fire.

Where I was. I was confined to a crouching attitude, in fact almost lying down.

Another blow of the battering-rams, and the cabin door burst wide open. The handspikes fell to the floor, and those silent but deadly weapons, the long, bright *cuchillos*, flashed even in the darkness.

A momentary pause, until my figure was seen against the aperture of the stern window, and, with a drunken yell, two of the Chilenos rushed at me, so impetuously that the foremost, stepping upon the table-cloth, vanished into the abyss below.

The ball from my pistol, fired with steady aim, told upon the second one, who fell headlong down the scuttle upon his partner; but the third, who was the lame porter himself, now satisfied that I was the sole garrison of the place, leaped across the corner of the hatchway, and reached for me with his long knife. I drew back toward the window by foreshortening my legs, and then, straightening again, let drive both feet at his head. In making that manœuvre, I received one severe cut in the leg; but my assailant was thrown backward off the transom, half rose to his feet to receive a stunning blow from the butt of my empty pistol, staggered, and fell into the iron grasp of the second mate, who, without ceremony, pitched him, neck and crop, down into the run upon his groaning comrades.

"Strike a light, quick, Mr. Gifford!" I cried. "I'm cut with that infernal *cuchillo*, but I don't know how bad it is."

"Ay, ay!" answered my young shipmate. "Let's get the hatch on first." And, seizing the ring of the scuttle, he clapped it into its place, pulled the table upon it, and then threw his own hundred and eighty pounds avoirdupois upon the table.

"Now let's see 'em get out of that trap!" said he, as he fumbled with the petticoat lamp. "Two of 'em, are n't there?"

"There's three!" I answered. "Bear a hand with the light."

"Three! the devil there is! And all stowed under the hatches? But never mind, you can spin the yarn while I'm dressing your cut."

"It is n't anything dangerous," I said, for by this time the light of the lamp was

shining upon it, and I felt assured that I had escaped more cheaply than could have been expected.

"Oh, no," assented Mr. Gifford, "it's nothing dangerous; but 't is bad enough though. Here, lie down on your side, and take one of my suspenders for a strap, and this empty pistol for a toggil, or rather a heaver, and make a tourniquet. Luckily we've got the medicine-chest here, — almost the only thing that was not sold separately, but goes with the ship, — plenty of needles, and stickum plaster. I'll fix you out in short order. The bags are all safe, are n't they?"

"Oh, yes!" said I. "They never should have had 'em. I'd have dropped 'em out of that window first. But what shall we do with these cut-throats? It is n't pleasant to have 'em yelling and groaning here all night."

"No: but there'll be more help here directly," returned Mr. Gifford. "I passed under the stern of the 'Unicorn,' that arrived here today, and Tom Manchester, the mate, who is an old shipmate of mine, hailed me. I could n't make any stop then to gam with him; but he's going to man his boat, and come aboard here directly. I believe I can hear his oars now, but these savages under us make such a cursed noise! Here, sit up! rest your weight on the table now, but keep the strap on, and the bleeding will stop directly."

He ran on deck to hail the coming boat, and in a minute returned with Manchester and his boat's crew from the "Unicorn," who were soon made acquainted with the main facts.

We lost no time in communicating with the authorities on shore, and a strong force of *vigilantes* were at once sent to take our prisoners in charge.

The run was opened, and they were all dragged out, when the victim of my pistol was found to be already dead, the ball having entered his neck and pierced the jugular vein. The first assailant was also mortally injured, his spine being broken, either by his own fall or the fall of the others upon him. Our lame friend, Pedro, as the policeman called him, — for all the men were known as old offenders, — although somewhat bruised and battered, had not received any dangerous wound.

The courts in Chili were more summary in dealing justice than ours are, and we had

a chance within a few days to give our evidence, and to see Pedro, the only survivor of the three desperadoes, sent away under guard to join the chain-gang.

I secured a passage for home on the same day that Mr. Gifford sailed as first officer of the "Adelaide," but we had both profited by experience, and found a way to send home our money without carrying bags of gold to

sea with us. We have often, in later years, talked over our own foolishness in thus carrying gold on board in broad daylight, and then suffering a band of robbers to drift silently under our bows and take us by surprise; and surely neither of us can forget that last night spent on board our old condemned ship "Phaeton" in Valparaiso Bay.



THE DISCARDED DAUGHTER.

BY ETTA W. PIERCE.

CHAPTER I.

Over the crags and the long, black, desolate beach the wind and rain went driving pitilessly. It had stormed all day,—it was storming still at nightfall, harder, fiercer than ever.

Down in that little fishing-hamlet, nestling close to the lonely shore, a few lights were shining out already in the cottage windows, and the red, lurid eye of the lighthouse glared ominously across the bar. How the white, hungry waves came thundering up the sands! How the wind shrieked and sobbed through the hollows of the rocks, and over the sand-hills and the wild, wet marshes! It was a dreary night, and a dreary coast.

In that same fishing-hamlet, above mentioned, old Hans Eckhart, sitting by a fire that leaped and roared up the wide chimney, in defiance of wind and rain, took his stumpy, black pipe from his mouth, and looked about him, with a sort of dull surprise on his broad, brown face.

"Bless me! Hagar, do you hear it storm?"
"Yes, father."

She raised her head from the low window-ledge where it had been resting, and the firelight struck full upon her.

Hagar Eckhart was scarcely seventeen. It was a strange, beautiful face that the girl had. Wide, sloe eyes of midnight blackness, white-lidded and long-lashed. The forehead was very broad; the braids, blue-black and royally massive; the cheek, a dusky carmine; and the mouth was full, curved, and gorgeously stained with a wet, rich red. As she crouched there in the fierce firelight, with her head thrown back, and her small brown hands wreathed listlessly above it, you would have said it was a face for which another Mark Antony might fling a world away.

"If any ship goes to sailing up the channel tonight, I pity 'um," said old Hans. "I've lived on this coast, man and boy, for fifty years, but I never heard it blow harder than this afore."

Hagar's dark, passionate eyes turned slowly from the cheerful coals back toward the night beyond the window. She shud-

dered; how black and thick it was! She could see nothing beyond the pane but the red beacon-fire of the lighthouse, and a few lamps in the low fishing-village. Nothing? Yes; farther away toward the town, among clumps of dwarfed cedars and stunted pines, rose up the square, gray walls of Earnscliffe, and its broad casements were glaring through the darkness, all ablaze with light. Earnscliffe was the gayest and the haughtiest house for miles and miles around.

Old Hans laid down his pipe, looking the while at the still young figure in the window, and wondering what made her such an oddity.

"Hagar," he said, "where 's Stephen gone?"

She did not turn her head.

"To the tavern probably. I don't know."

Old Hans cast a sober glance at the coals. Stephen was falling into bad ways; and his only boy, too.

The old-fashioned clock in the corner ticked loudly; the cat purred around Hagar's drooping hand; but still the royal face was pressed close against the dripping pane, the wide black eyes looked steadily out into the night.

"Hark!" said Hans suddenly.

Some one was coming round the hut, whistling shrilly.

"That is Steve now," he said.

Hagar started back with a cry as the hard, sun-burned face of Stephen Eckhart looked into her own from the other side of the pane. He flung up the window with a low laugh.

"Did I frighten you, Pussie?"

"Stephen!"

"Git the lantern, and come out here, will you, father?"

"What for?" growled Hans.

Stephen shook himself like a great water-dog.

"That yacht that pushed off from Shipping Point a half-hour ago with some young fellows from Earnscliffe aboard, has struck on the rocks and gone down."

"Bless me!" cried Hans.

"If you're a mind to bear a hand"—began Stephen doggedly.

Hagar leaned forward and grasped his arm.

"Where are the men?"

Stephen placed his elbows on the window-ledge and looked indifferently in at the fire.

"Washed up out here. We've jest found 'em."

"Dead?" cried Hans, aghast.

"Dead as herrin's," said Steve laconically.

The old fisherman came hurrying to the door, his tarpaulin crushed down over his brow, and with lantern in hand.

"A bad house—a bad race," he muttered, under his breath.

"The squire 'll take it kind of us to bring the bodies away," shouted Stephen. "Good Lord! how it blows!"

They went out through the darkness together; then the wind and rain came between and silenced them.

Hagar stood alone in the hut.

The storm beat against the window. She pushed back her wet black hair, and strained her eyes to see the glimmer of the lights among the dwarfed pines. And why? She had never cared for Earncliffe or its grandeur before. It was a gay, proud house; that she knew, and that only. The haughty old squire had passed her sometimes on the beach in his glittering carriage. Sometimes, of summer mornings, she had seen a pale, high-bred girl, with a score of gay ladies and gallants in attendance, gallop by the door, and old Hans had told her it was the squire's daughter, but that was all. There was a great gulf fixed between the fisherman's daughter and Earncliffe.

Down there on the low rocks, the surf thundering, Hagar listened. Dead men were lying there, waiting for burial. She thought the waves were shrieking it to each other, and clamoring again for the prey they had tossed up from their hungry hearts.

Hark! A faint murmur of voices rose up on the wind. One stormy sweep of white rain across the window, on over the marshes; then a sudden lull, and Hagar heard them coming.

She stood in the low doorway shading the light with her hand, its red blaze showing full in her eyes and slipping adown her damp, wild hair. First, the hale, hearty face of old Hans; then Stephen.

They came in, and she closed the door behind them, keeping her glance fixedly away

from the burden they bore. It was the body of a man, with wet garments, rich and fine, clinging to him. They laid him down on the old fisherman's bed, in the firelight.

"He 's got a breath of life in him, he has," said Hans, crossing his arms behind him, and gazing at the still, white face; "but the other chap was a goner."

Stephen lifted up the handsome, drooping head.

"There 's wine in the closet; bring it, Hagar."

She obeyed, silent and pale.

"Now chafe the hands, can't you?"

What handsome hands they were! how much whiter than her own! There was a broad diamond signet-ring on the left one that was worth a prince's ransom! regular, high-bred, with loose, gold-brown curls falling over the white forehead, and an aristocratic clearness and finish of outline. She dropped the hands with the first current of warmth that thrilled them.

"It 's the same gentleman that was riding on the beach with Miss Earncliffe yesterday," said Stephen.

Old Hans jogged his elbow. The stranger's eyes were unclosing slowly.

He looked around. First at the brown, unfamiliar wall, at the ruddy fire, at the two kindly fishermen, and from thence to the face of Hagar. Their eyes met; it was a strange, fateful look. Hagar shrank back slowly. John Romaine's eyes followed her face with a mixture of bewildered pleasure and surprise.

"Where am I?" he said feebly.

"With friends," answered old Hans cheerily.

He raised himself up, and pressed his hand to his forehead in a bewildered way.

"And the yacht?"

"It 's gone under, sir."

Romaine sank back, remembering then.

"Poor fellows!" he said faintly.

"We laid their bodies in the boat-house," said old Hans. "Steve shall go to Earncliffe and tell the squire. Here 's a drop of wine for you, sir."

Rough hearts, but kind ones. An hour after, and John Romaine was leaning back in his chair before the old fisherman's fire, idly talking with Hans of the disaster, and glancing admiringly at the still, slender figure which sat apart in the shadow, with her gorgeous Southern face bowed listlessly on her hand. Did he guess that she was a

listener to every word that fell from his lips? It was a brief story, related politely, graciously, yet with something in the young aristocrat's manner that showed how unused he was to such an audience and such surroundings. He was a guest at Earnscliffe. The men who had perished with the yacht were the squire's servants, and the pushing out of the frail craft from Shipping Point in the night-storm had been a freak of desperate boldness, — that was all.

And the still figure in the shadow? With her burning cheek pressed to the pane, and the dark eyes watching one pale, watery star, just broken out from the windy clouds, she sat listening to the voice that was the deepest and the sweetest that she had ever heard from mortal lips. No one spoke to her, — no one heeded her, except, perhaps, Romaine, and presently he arose to say good-night. She heard him, but did not turn her head.

"What shall I call you?" he said, beside her chair.

"Hagar Eckhart."

He looked down at her with puzzled blue eyes.

"Then, good-night, Miss Hagar."

"Good-night."

The storm passed. With the morning there was sunshine, and wide streaks of blue sky tangled in with the gray clouds overhead, and the wind blew strong and steady from the west.

John Romaine astonished himself by rising in time to see from the window of his low room the fierce, crimson daybreak stream over the lighthouse on the Point, and the high gray walls of Earnscliffe, proudly and sullenly facing the sea. He shrugged his broad, handsome shoulders.

"I wonder if Miss Edith has thought of me since yesterday. Whew! what a night it was, though!"

He went down. Old Hans met him with a cheery "good-morning" in the little dark kitchen.

"I've sent Steve to Earnscliffe to let them know where you are," he said; whereupon Romaine sat down to breakfast.

It was a neat, well-spread board, — even the young patrician's fastidious taste could find no fault with it. He sipped his coffee, toyed with a cluster of water-lilies that some one had placed in a glass at his right hand, and wondered where the graceful girl-figure

was that he had seen in that room the night before. She was gone, certainly.

"A spirit of the surf, perhaps," he said to himself. "Faith! she was handsome enough for one."

He knew that the Earnscliffe carriage would be sent for him at once, and rising from the table he went to the window and looked off down the beach.

"She fanned my life out with her soft little sighs;

She hushed me to death with her face so fair,"

sang a full, clear voice just outside the window. Romaine caught up the words:

"I was drunk with the light of her wild blue eyes,

I was strangled dumb in her long gold hair."

He leaped out and stood by the singer. She was sitting in the low porch, in the shadow of a silver-leaved poplar, with needle and mesh-block, and a pile of nets at her side. Her shining head was bowed; her graceful brown fingers were flying through her work like mad.

"Little beauty!" muttered Romaine under his breath.

She looked up.

"Do you read Owen Meredith?" he said, leaning, handsome and smiling, against the framework of the porch.

"Sometimes."

Romaine lifted his eyebrows.

"You are not" — he began, "that is — Hans is not" —

She understood him. Her voice had a touch of bitterness in it.

"Hans is my father — Stephen my brother."

"Jove! what a freak of fortune!" he exclaimed to himself.

She went on with her work silently. Romaine was gravely looking down the beach to the sea.

"Are you never lonely?" he said. "This is the dreariest place in the world, I think."

"Is it? I never knew any other place."

"And are you always alone here?" asked Romaine.

She made a quick, slight gesture.

"Always."

He watched her intently. There was a carriage rolling swiftly across the beach in the morning sun, and he knew it.

"I must thank you Miss Hagar, for your

kindness to me last night. I shall never forget that I owe my life to your father and brother."

Her wide, black eyes opened.

"There is no need of thanks: they would have done the same for any one."

Romaine bit his lip, half-smiling beneath his heavy mustache.

"Say good-by to me, Miss Hagar."

Hagar looked up. A light open carriage, drawn by a pair of superb gray horses, had stopped at the very door. It had two occupants, — one a tall, gray-haired man of fifty, perhaps, with a cold, aristocratic face; the other a young girl, — Squire Earnscliffe and his daughter, Hagar knew.

Romaine leaped down from the porch. One moment of quick, gay greeting, and he had Edith Earnscliffe's exquisitely gloved hand in his own, — he was looking into her smiling, pearly face. It was clear-cut, beautiful, with hair the color of ash and gold, eyes blue and bright and scornful, and thin lips, scarlet red. She leaned forward, with the long white plumes of her hat dancing about it enviously.

"We were martyrs at Earnscliffe last night, — one and all. I shall never forgive you."

"Never?" said Romaine, gallantly raising the slight hand to his lips. "Then I had better have drowned."

"Come into the carriage!" she commanded, smiling.

Squire Earnscliffe turned the gray horses, and made room for Romaine among the crimson carriage cushions.

"How have these people treated you?" he said.

Romaine paused, with his foot on the step.

"With all due hospitality. Here is my host: let me make my adieux."

Earnscliffe looked around him for the first time with something like interest. The first object that met his sight was Hagar, mending her nets in the old porch as composed as if the figures in that glittering carriage were so many crabs from the sands below; the next, old Hans, standing in the door watching him.

It might have been the dark, wonderful beauty of the girl, — it might have been the keen, merciless gaze of the old fisherman, but Squire Earnscliffe's thin, haughty face crimsoned and paled, he clutched at one side of the carriage a moment, then grew

suddenly calm. They looked straight in each other's eyes, Hans and the rich, purse-proud squire. The face of the fisherman was grave and stolid, — unreadable, too, as hieroglyphics; but a faint line of tremulous whiteness came out on Squire Earnscliffe's lips. He bowed stiffly. Hans's upright head gave him no answering salutation; there was something in his face that made it for the moment as stately as a king's. He stood and watched him.

Romaine leaped into the carriage. It dashed off madly down the beach.

"Is that man's name Eckhart?" said the squire.

"Yes," carelessly from Romaine.

"And that girl?"

"His daughter."

Edith tapped his shoulder lightly, whispering behind her finger-tips, —

"What a lovely face! Were you making love to her?"

He laughed.

"Non, mademoiselle."

He did not know that Hagar Eckhart had dropped her work in the old porch, and was watching the retreating carriage with large, restless eyes. The shadow of the silver poplar-tree stretched at her feet dark and heavy, and another smaller shadow.

"Hagar!" said old Hans.

She started as if she had been dreaming. Hans was looking down at her with knitted brows.

"My girl," he said sternly, "I hate Squire Earnscliffe, — I hate his house, and he hates mine. Will you remember it?"

Her eyes dilated.

"And, Hagar" —

"Father?"

"That boy must never come here again, — his hands are too white, his face too handsome. Do you hear?"

"Yes, father."

"Then go in."

She turned like an empress, with a bright spot on either cheek, and obeyed him; and old Hans stood outside in her place, sullen and silent, looking darkly off toward Earnscliffe.

CHAPTER II.

September on the shore. The thistle-down was sailing about in the rocky pastures, there were gray clouds hanging low over the lighthouse, and the east wind blew sharp across the bar. The blank day was

dying out in a fiery sunset of tan and scarlet. Hagar Eckhart, crouching on a point of rocks, a half-mile down the sands, saw the windows of Earncliffe flaming weirdly in the light which shot off, at last, into the pine tops, nodding above them, like a brotherhood of cowed friars. The surf was creeping up the sands. It was with a tinkle of sparkling crystals, a splash of black, wind-swept waves, a roar. Stephen's great dog bounded from it up the rocks, dripping, and crouched down with wistful eyes at Hagar's feet.

The spot had become very dear to Hagar. Sheltered in among the hollows of the brown rocks, she passed hours in watching sea and clouds, and thinking her own wild thoughts. Stephen had the inn; Hans his pipe and boon companions; who knew or cared?

A sound of voices and low laughter rose suddenly from the sands below. Hagar held the growling dog with both hands, and looked down.

A pretty, bright-painted row-boat had just grated against the shore, and its occupants—two or three stylish masculine figures, and a group of ladies in a gleam of rich Indian shawls, plumed caps and shining dresses—were landing gayly, on the wet, slippery shingles,—ladies and gentlemen from Earncliffe, of course. Such a gay picture as they made on that dark, desolate beach! It was like a glimpse of fairyland; and, foremost among them, in the clear, sunset light, stood the tall, dashing form of Romaine, helping some one up the rocks,—a fair blonde, with a bunch of wild flag in her hand. It was Edith Earncliffe. The long golden hair, streaming in loose curls on the wind, the exquisite figure, the slow grace of movement, could belong to no other. A moment, and Romaine had drawn the boat up the sands, secured it, and was sauntering off toward Earncliffe, with the fair blonde on his arm. The rocks were alone once more with their pet children,—Hagar Eckhart and the sea-gulls.

She dropped her face against the rough rock, and sat motionless,—a Sybarite, with her starved life stinging her like a scorpion. At Earncliffe there were luxury, refinement, beauty,—that she knew. At home, were bare walls, Hans, and Stephen. Was the heiress of Earncliffe better than she, that such a gulf of difference should lie between them? But the pain passed in a moment. There was good blue blood in Ha-

gar's veins,—proud blood, too. She lifted her head, and stroked Stephen's great dog with her graceful brown hands.

"I don't care," she said stoically.

He growled. At the same moment, a bright, glancing object fell from the rocks above into her lap. It was a cluster of gorgeous, velvety cardinal-flowers,—the last of the year.

"I thought nothing but sea-gulls ever came here," said John Romaine, springing down to her side. "Miss Eckhart, you look like Undine herself sitting among the foam-bells."

"Do I?" said Hagar dryly. "I never saw Undine."

She rose up, as she spoke, fairer than a half-dozen Undines. That pure Greek face, with its dark, drooping eye and raven braids and scarlet lips! Romaine's intent gaze brought no flush to it, but the mouth curved haughtily, and he understood, and looked away.

"I saw you from the boat," he said. "I have haunted this shore for weeks just to see you once."

Frank, at least. She answered him in the same dry tone.

"I am sorry."

"You need not be,—my reward has come at last."

Her eyes looked wicked, as she glanced up at the cold, gray clouds.

"It is going to rain. Boatswain, you and I must go home."

Boatswain poked his cold nose into her hand, ready and willing. Romaine was not.

"Wait!" he pleaded. "May I not see you sometimes, Miss Hagar? Let me be your friend."

She drew back proudly.

"You are very kind—but"—

"What?"

"Never try to see me! Your place is at Earncliffe—mine, in that humble fishing-hut over the marshes."

She turned imperiously, and calling to the dog, leaped down from her perch and ran away up the beach, leaving John Romaine standing in his tracks, half-angry, yet admiring old Hans Eckhart's daughter more profoundly than he had ever admired mortal woman before.

"Jove!" he muttered, starting off toward Earncliffe, "she ought to have been born a queen."

Hagar went on her way, swinging her sun-bonnet in her hand, her black eyes cast down and her red lips pressed tightly together. It was growing dark, and the tide was coming rapidly in behind her, and the wind whistled shrilly across the sands. She looked back once, but the tall, hand-some figure on the rocks had disappeared.

"Hagar!" called a voice. Stephen came across the shingles, hurried and pale. "I've been hunting for you, Hagar. Come home."

She grasped his arm, paling to the lips, his voice was so strange and ominous.

"What is it, Stephen?"

He rubbed his jacket-sleeve across his eyes. It was a warm heart.

"Father," began Stephen, jerking the words out laboriously. "He's in a bad way, — he is, Hagar!"

She stared at him dumbly.

"He started for the harbor with Skipper Gale, just arter noon," Stephen went on, "and the skipper rowed back afore sunset with him in the bottom of the boat, face up'ards, and he ha'n't spoke or stirred since."

One low, pained cry, and Hagar was rushing up the path, panting hoarsely through white lips. Lone, dark shore, and lonelier, darker sea, danced before her. She loved her old father in spite of all.

The door of the little low dwelling was open. She went in noiselessly. Hans lay on his bed with closed eyes, and his worn, old face upturned in the dying light. She threw herself down beside him.

"Father!"

A low groan. Stephen came in and stood at the foot of the bed, with the old hamlet doctor. The latter shook his head vaguely.

"He's got a fit—bad. Folks die in 'em sometimes."

Hagar crouched low at the bedside, and took up the hard, cold hand of the old fisherman, caressing it mutely. Three weeks before, in that very room, Romaine had lain, one dreadful night, senseless and half drowned. Did she remember it?

The dark crept in thickly. An ominous, woful dark it seemed to Hagar. The dull, red fire-light flickered feebly on the wall, — a gust of wind howled through the poplars; then the old man's lips moved, — it was only a whisper, but Hagar heard it, —

"Earnscliffe!"

She touched his rough hand with her lips.

He groaned out the word again.

"Father!" cried Hagar.

The glazed eyes opened slowly and turned on her face.

"Hagar — little girl" — in a faint whisper.

She bent down to him. His old face grew so strained and wild in his effort to speak, —

"Can you go to Earnscliffe, Hagar?"

"Yes, father."

He gasped, —

"Tell the squire I want him."

"Yes, father."

"He will know" —

The gray head fell back. Hagar leaned over and kissed him madly, despairingly, — the next moment she was out in the night.

A wild way, — a long, dark, desolate way. It was raining, too. Hagar started from the door like a hunted wild creature. The mist came driving in from seaward, — the waves dashed fiercely across the bar; and down on the shore, the red, unwinking eye of the lighthouse was watching sleeplessly. She ran across the marshes, along the sandy beach-road, through the dwarfed black pines, till she reached the arched gateway that led to the Earnscliffe grounds.

From the windows opening upon it, a broad patch of light was streaming across the piazza which shaded the front of the house. Some one was pacing back and forth there, smoking a cigar whose subtle Cuban odor filled the misty air with fragrance. Hagar sprang upon the piazza in the broad patch of light, and stood face to face with John Romaine.

Such a picture as she made! Romaine uttered an exclamation, and dashed his cigar into the shrubbery.

"Miss Eckhart! Is it possible?"

The great wild eyes looked up to his

"Where is Squire Earnscliffe?"

Romaine drew her into the hall.

"Do you want to see him?"

"Yes."

He flung open a door at the foot of the staircase.

"Come in."

It was a room, long and low, and paneled with carved oak. The floor was hidden in a soft, thick carpet, green as swamp-mosses, and across the tall windows amber satin curtains were sweeping in heavy, shimmering folds. There were low, easy chairs of polished scented Indian wood, upholstered with deep green leather standing

here and there, and sofas, piled with amber satin pillows that looked like sunshine sleeping on some green June hill. A fire burned in the grate, and on the mantel of Egyptian marble a cluster of waxen camellias stood in an exquisite Indian vase. Over them, half in light, half in shadow, hung the only picture in the room, — a purple tropic sea, sleeping in misty moonlight, with two milk-white sea-gulls perched on a gray, wrinkled reef.

Two figures there. Squire Earnscliffe, pacing back and forth before the fire, with his hands crossed behind him; and his daughter, sitting near in an evening dress of violet silk, with its wide sleeves falling away from her bare white arms, and her golden hair gathered into a knot of shining curls at the back of the lovely head.

Squire Earnscliffe stopped short in his promenade as the door opened. Romaine held it for Hagar to pass through.

"Miss Eckhart!"

He knew her. His thin nostrils dilated. Hagar stood, still and pallid, on the threshold.

"I came to ask you to go to my father, Squire Earnscliffe. He is sick, — he sent me to tell you."

A flush shot across Squire Earnscliffe's face. He repeated the word mechanically.

"Sick?"

"Yes," catching her breath.

He looked at her strangely.

"Did you come all the way for me alone?"

"Yes."

"You are a brave girl."

Hagar felt herself drawn forward into a chair. A moment after Squire Earnscliffe was standing beside her with his cloak on and his hat over his brow.

"Remain here till I return," he said; "it will not be long."

She comprehended, and tried to rise up, but he held her back.

"I am going alone. Stay here and rest!" Something in his manner cowed and frightened her. Miss Earnscliffe was looking at them both with wide-open eyes.

"Papa, it is raining."

"I know."

"Then I would not go."

He looked at her darkly. The jeweled hand, holding his cloak together at the throat, trembled.

"You would not? There are some voices I must follow if they call me to hell!"

"Papa!"

"Be quiet. I will come back in an hour."

His heavy booted foot stirred the echoes in the hall a moment, then the door clanged sullenly behind him. He was gone. Hagar sat alone with the heiress of Earnscliffe.

The blue, scornful eyes surveyed her from head to foot, with a sort of latent wonder that was half admiration. In the fire-light, Hagar's face had taken a feverish beauty that was almost painful. Miss Earnscliffe's clear, contemptuous voice broke the silence.

"What has that — that person to do with Squire Earnscliffe? Do you know?"

"How should I know?"

"Has he told you nothing more?"

"Nothing."

Miss Earnscliffe settled back in her chair, with half-closed eyes, the golden lashes drooping, and band and bracelet flashing in the light. She was mystified, annoyed; and she was hoping John Romaine would not come in to play chess with her while Hagar sat there. He did not. His quick step echoed in the hall, passed the door, and went on up the stairs till it was lost in silence.

An hour passed so, — a dreadful, silent hour. It seemed an eternity to Hagar. Would the Squire never come? Why was she sitting quietly under the roof of the man her father hated, while down on the desolate shore he lay dying, perhaps? She started up.

The door was flung open, and Squire Earnscliffe came in. Rain was dripping from his cloak, — his set face was wet with it. Hagar strangled the cry that rose to her lips.

"Papa!" cried Edith.

He passed her to Hagar. The fire-light, the low, sumptuous room danced before the girl's eyes as he stood looking down upon her.

"You will not go back tonight, — this is your home now," said the strained, hard voice.

She stared at him dumbly.

"Yours as long as it is mine: remember it."

She flung up her arms.

"Is he dead?" she cried out.

"He is dead."

She fell a dead weight on his breast. Tired heart and tired frame could bear no more, — Hagar had fainted quite away.

CHAPTER III.

"Thomas!"

The old servant touched his cap.

"Take my horse. I shall want him again at nine."

John Romaine went up the path under the aromatic pines, dashing and handsome, whistling an air from "Trovatore," and carelessly clipping at the dead flower-stalks with his silver-mounted riding-whip. It had been a blue, hazy Indian summer's day; the clouds hung dreaming over the sea,—the air was heavy with a slumbering sweetness.

A figure stood in the low window as he came along the piazza. He heard the soft coo of a dove. It was fluttering on the sill,—a snow-white fan-tail, looking with round eyes at the little jeweled hand which the figure held out to it. She called to it softly.

Edith Earncliffe, in a dinner dress of sweeping silk,—the hue of May lilacs. There were falls of misty lace here and there about it, and a white, shining line of pearls round the lovely arms and throat, and in the wan, golden hair. The proud young face, with its pansy-colored eyes and damask cheeks, was very fair to see. The dove balanced itself daintily on her fingertips, picked at the pearls on her wrist, and fluttered away at the tread of Romaine.

He doffed his cap.

"Am I *de trop*?"

She laughed, and gave him her hand.

"No." Her eyes said a great deal more. Romaine looked down the gilded length of the crimson drawing-rooms.

"First in the field," he said.

"No: papa has taken Miss Eckhart and his other guests into the picture-gallery. Shall we join them?"

His knowing, dark eyes laughed at her.

"Oh, I am quite content to remain here."

"But"—blushing.

He threw himself down near her, half-gallantly, half-lazily.

"I have ridden from the harbor to say good-by to you. Don't quarrel with me."

"Good-by?"

Edith plucked so nervously at the pearls on her wrist that he expected to see them go rolling away over the floor.

"I return to town tomorrow."

"Indeed?"

"Are you sorry?" mischievously.

She colored again.

"Yes: it will be so dull here, and we are to remain a month longer."

Her sandal-wood fan was lying on the window-sill. He took it up.

"Does Miss Eckhart accompany you to town?"

"Yes."

"For the winter, I suppose?"

She looked at him suspiciously, but the careless, handsome face re-assured her. He toyed idly with the fan.

"Papa has decided so."

Romaine laid down the fan satisfied. Wise Romaine! There was another secret looking out from Edith Earncliffe's eyes which he might have learned more easily still. She loved him.

Dinner came. The Earncliffe dining-room was long and wide and sumptuous, with its rich tables and glittering side-boards. Squire Earncliffe sat in state among his guests. Miss Eckhart was at his right hand.

She was in complete black, pale and statuesque. Her rich hair was brushed away from the blue-veined temples; the eyes beneath looked larger and blacker than ever, and the lids had a white droop. They flashed up involuntarily at Romaine's earnest gaze. Both bowed.

"A marble Juno," he said to Edith.

Down on the shore, in the little windswept graveyard of the hamlet, there was a new mound. Old Hans lay there. Hagar had been at Earncliffe a month. It was the squire's work. He treated her as daintily as if she had been born a princess. A thousand little favors laid at her feet daily; a studied regard for her ease at all times; a quiet, unobtrusive watch of her slightest movements, and his cold, proud manner that always grew so humble before her,—Hagar could but notice these things.

She had quick instincts. They held her aloof from every member of the household; they froze the thanks on her lips. She grew cold, grave, and reticent.

Romaine and some of the younger gentlemen left the table with the ladies. Presently Edith came sweeping past him toward the music-room on the arm of a bearded artist. The arrowy, sidelong glance shot from under her long lashes at his cool, handsome face, was quite unheeded. He was watching Hagar Eckhart.

"A penny for your thoughts, *monsieur*," said Edith.

"They are too precious for barter," he answered, smiling.

She went on:

Hagar was standing at a marble table, with a cluster of flowers and a slender Etruscan vase before her.

He went to her side.

"What have I done, Miss Eckhart?"

She turned.

"Done?"

"Yes; you have ceased speaking to me altogether."

The flowers were put quietly into the vase.

"Pardon me." His dark eyes watched her, half-tender, half-laughing.

"If you will talk with me now."

"Well?" in a little annoyed tone.

"Tell me how you like Earncliffe."

She was looking over his shoulder at the autumn moon in the purple south-west.

"I like it."

She stood so dim and fair and still in the uncertain light, with her long black dress sweeping around her, that Romaine half held his breath.

"Do you know the place is haunted?" he asked.

"Yes," smiling: "hear it!"

It was the low sigh of the pines, and the sea on the rocks.

"No," said Romaine, "that is not it, — haunted by a legend."

She lifted her eyes, as wondering as a child's.

"Have you never heard it?"

"No."

"The old servants or the hamlet fishermen would tell it to you with a better grace than mine; it is as familiar to them as the sea itself."

There was something in Romaine's face that held Hagar's eyes like a spell. He looked down the long vacant drawing-room, back again to her.

"You remind me of it standing here; but — are you brave? It is somewhat ghostly."

She smiled.

"I think I can bear to hear it."

The room was dark and echoing; the carved chairs and cabinets sat up against the wall, like so many spectres eager to listen, and Romaine began, half-lightly, half-gravely, —

"Once upon a time, as the fairy stories say, there was a certain Earncliffe, master

in this old place, young and handsome, and very much inclined, as all the Earncliffe have hitherto been, to a fast life and dissipated companions. The hamlet people saw but little of him. It was at this time that the young prodigal came home, a matter of pure necessity, it seems to have been, and he sat himself down, if not in repentance, at least, in peace, to pass the year on his neglected estate."

Romaine looked at Hagar's upturned, listening face, and his own grew grave.

"By and by news came that Earncliffe was betrothed to a high-born heiress; he was to build up his fallen fortunes with her wealth. The old house would keep its old name after all. The hamlet people heard, and shook their heads vaguely. Earncliffe had taken to sunset walks, of late, under the pines, — to wild gallops along the shore, — to rows in the white moonlight; and he was never alone. It was a lady, they said, something like this lady beside me, — that is, she had a Southern face, with midnight eyes and raven hair. Sometimes they would hear her voice in these old rooms, sweet as the white symbols of the sea-foam when they clash on the pebbles. They would see her standing in these windows in the rare silks and old jewels of the house, watching the rise of moons and the set of suns, or, more likely, the coming of Earncliffe through purple summer twilights. They tell me, if one should come here and listen of still midnights they might hear the dead echoes of her old love-songs stirring the dusk, or the rustle of her dress over the silent floors, or the sound of her sighs in the dim recesses."

Hagar's hand touched his arm in a startled, terrified way. A quivering streak of moonlight had cloven the shadows of the damask curtain and fallen ghostfully across the floor. She heard something behind it, in the darkness, that sounded like a footstep.

Romaine took the little hand upon his arm and held it firmly in his own.

"Well, as I was saying" —

Something rattled beside Romaine, like a hard breath quickly drawn. He turned, and Squire Earncliffe stood there, with eyes shining through the shadows like live coals.

"Let me close the window," he said sharply. "Miss Eckhart is shivering. Curse this barren place!"

Hagar recoiled to Romaine's side with a tear on her black lashes.

"I have another story to tell you," he whispered.

"Of Earnscliffe?" shivering.

"No. Of myself."

The squire turned on them sharply.

"Come into the music-room! This is the dreariest place in the house. Ugh!"

He flung the door wide open. A flood of light streamed through. Hagar felt herself drawn back; her hand was carried to a mustached lip, and the passionate voice of Romaine breathed in her ear, —

"I love you! I want you to know it for your own sake and mine, Hagar."

The hand was dropped softly. Hagar stood in the music-room with the gay crowd and the lights around her, and Edith at the piano, — stood there with her life, and the night and its darkness burst suddenly into bloom!

It was yet early when Thomas came to the hall door with Romaine's horse. Hagar was standing in a dim recess with a fall of drapery around her. He went to her side.

"You gave me no answer to my last story, Hagar."

She crimsoned from brow to throat. He bent over her, his daring lips touched hers, kissed hers passionately, and she kissed back.

"Good-night. I shall come again, for your sake, Hagar."

A month after she knew what he meant, but not then; but Squire Earnscliffe, standing just outside the recess, turned suddenly, and his look encountered Romaine's. Neither ever forgot the moment. To Romaine it was a revelation — a seal of certainty on what he had half guessed; to Earnscliffe, a mortal despair. The cruel eyes of Romaine seemed searching him through and through. His thin, aristocratic face whitened; he caught at the drapery behind him, like a man who feels the quicksand under his feet; then Romaine bowed himself out.

CHAPTER IV.

Quiet and solitude at Earnscliffe for the next week. The sky was growing gray and cold, — it was drawing toward winter, and visitors there were like summer birds. Hagar came up from the barren shore one afternoon. The marshes were bleak and dreary; the mournful clouds hung dark and

low over the sea. She went on, treading over the fallen pine needles, to Earnscliffe gate. A man stood there waiting, with his hands thrust into the pockets of his pea-jacket, and a great water-dog at his feet. She stopped; it was Stephen Eckhart.

The tears leaped up thick to Hagar's eyes. She went up to him. The broad, brown face lighted; he looked at her from head to foot in a sort of pleased amaze, then drew back, while the dog yawned and licked her hand.

"Stephen!"

"Miss — that is, Hagar, you see I've shipped aboard a whaler for a three-year voyage, and I wanted to come and bid ye good-by."

She clung to his arm.

"O Stephen!"

"Yes, home a'n't home now. You won't take it hard of me if I say I'd like to be remembered kindly by you, Hagar?"

"What do you mean?"

She pressed close up to him, and looked into his honest eyes. Stephen's composure came near breaking down at the sight of that pale, beautiful face.

"You and I was brought up together, anyhow, Hagar, and I love you better now than I ever did afore."

"My dear brother!" she said tearfully.

He held her off at arm's length, with a strange, timid look in his face.

"Let folks talk that want to; but if I make a good vyage, Hagar, and if you think you could like me well enough by and by, I'd like to be more to you than a brother."

She stood thunderstruck — uncomprehending. Was the man mad?

He read the thought in her face.

"Don't you know, Hagar?" he cried out fearfully.

"Know?"

"Don't you know what folks are talking about down there in the village?"

"No, Stephen," in a whisper.

He started back from her as if shot.

"I thought you knew, Hagar. I — I — that is, I'm sorry; I did n't mean to say anything."

She leaned back against the gate, feeling faint and sick.

"What is it, Stephen?"

The poor fellow was utterly frightened and discomfited.

"Don't ask me. I'm going down to the harbor now. Good-by."

He went away down the path, reluctantly, looking back at her over his shoulder. Hagar stood numb and stupefied till it was too late to recall him, and then she sank down by the gate and dropped her cheek on its hewn stone.

Twilight gathered. The pines moaned hoarsely overhead. It was growing dark. Hagar shivered with the cold and damp,—she had sat there an hour, certainly. She rose up. A groom stood holding a saddled horse inside the gate—a fiery bay—Romaine's. He had come, then, as he promised.

She opened the hall door. Edith's waiting-maid met her on the stair.

"Squire Earncliffe was waiting to see Miss Eckhart at the earliest possible moment."

Hagar brushed out her damp, disordered hair, smoothed the sweeping folds of her dress, and went down, wondering vaguely.

They sat in the low, green parlor, which she had first entered on the night of her father's death,—Squire Earncliffe, Edith, and Romaine. Edith's haughty face was deathly pale. Her hands lay in her lap, locked fast, but still tremulous; her eyes were bent down toward them. Squire Earncliffe placed a chair for Hagar. Mocking and weird the red fire-light danced on the hearth, and the shadows in the corners huddled together, dark and frightened,—she had never seen the room so lonely before.

Romaine arose and stood beside Hagar's chair. The squire's face was working convulsively.

"Hagar," he began, "John Romaine wants you for his wife, and I have given you to him."

Brief and to the point. Hagar's eyebrows arched.

"That is not all," said Romaine, looking calmly at the squire. Edith's lily face went down into her hands. It was the bitterest moment of the squire's life, and of hers.

"No, not all," he answered, catching at the mantel for support. "Hagar, what I must tell you now has been noised about in every nook of the hamlet,—you might have learned it weeks ago."

Romaine silently took Hagar's cold hand, and held it firmly.

"You remember," said the squire, facing them both with a pale, sorrowful face. "the story that you heard one night of a certain

wild master of Earncliffe, child? It was down in the fishing-hamlet below, that a young German sailor named Hans Eckhart had just found a home for himself and young orphan sister when Earncliffe first came home. She had a face like yours; and a passionate, willful heart. Earncliffe saw her and loved. She came to live in this old place for one long, happy year. It was a secret marriage, known to no one but the brother. Earncliffe forgot his fast companions—the betrothed bride, waiting for him far away—his debts—all—everything, but his beautiful Hagar; but his fast companions sought him out, after a time, and his debts began to press hard and heavy upon him, and to accumulate. Tired of his new life and of the dark-eyed hamlet-girl, he went away! My child, he went away, and left her to wear her sweet young life out in this lonely place; and one dreadful night she opened Hans Eckhart's door and stood in his cottage, with the cruel rain dripping from her hair, and cursed Earncliffe, and sank down there like one dead. That night a babe was born in Hans Eckhart's home,—that night a spirit went out from it,—Hagar died."

He stopped, with great drops of sweat standing out on his forehead, and clung to the marble again.

"Earncliffe returned to his estate, bringing his wealthy, high-born bride with him. The child in Hans Eckhart's cottage he did not dare to call his own. Hans was bribed to adopt it,—to keep the secret of its birth sacred till his death,—and—he did!"

Hagar cried out sharply. He lifted her to his breast—his hot tears rained down on her cheek.

"My child! My child!"

The room reeled before her,—she clung to Romaine's hand,—even then she knew and felt it was he who had righted her wrongs.

Edith came and kissed her with cold, white lips, then went away, and Squire Earncliffe knelt at her feet, and moaned from the depths of a dark remorse,—

"Forgive for her sake!"

Stephen Eckhart sailed away on his voy- age to the wild South seas. The night he left the little fishing-hamlet Earncliffe House was filled with light and revelry from garret to foundation,—it was Hagar Earncliffe's bridal eve.

Long after that same revelry had died away, the pallid face of Edith Earnscliffe remained pressed to the window-pane in her still, dark chamber, gazing blankly out into the night. She had found a sister she never knew, — she had lost the first and last great passion of her life. Years after she

married — well, the world said — a stately, purse-proud banker. Romaine and Hagar were far away under the skies of Italy. Edith and they rarely meet, but the blue-eyed boy who stands at Edith's knee today, and lifts to hers eyes as blue and bright as those she used to worship, is named Romaine.

THE DRAPED PORTRAIT.

BY CLARA LE CLERQ.

'T was a picture worthy of one of the old masters, that fine old library, with its rich carvings and heavy cornices, damask hangings and moss-like carpet. Peering from their niches in the dark, richly carved oak might be seen a Byron, a Shakspeare, a Milton, a Scott. Arranged in rows upon their broad, heavy shelves might be seen the gatherings of past years. A thousand volumes, — volumes in every language. Histories of every nation, romances of the days of ancient chivalry and knight-errantry, relics of foreign lands, richly sculptured Etruscan vases, containing branches of coral, precious stones from the mines of Golconda, large pearls from the depths of the Indian Ocean, and fragments of the stone that closed the mouth of the sepulchre of our Lord. An antique vial, inlaid with branches of coral and gold, contained water from the Dead Sea, while another, equally as ancient, but with pearl and ruby drops glistening over its dark surface, held a small portion of the holy water from the Holy City. These, with many other relics rich and rare, gave to the room a deep and absorbing interest.

Pictures — old family portraits, from the time of Junius Moncion, the knight-errant, booted and spurred, with his dark-plumed helmet, and shining sabre, down to the present day — were hung upon the dark walls, with here and there a richly dressed dame, with powdered wig, or a bright-eyed, bewitching maiden, with flowing ringlets, and pouting, ruby lips.

Apart from the others, above the rich, heavy, marble mantel, hung a *draped* picture. Alone, no other painting near, its sombre folds of crape seemed to cast a shade of gloom upon the bright, beautiful clusters of moss-rosebuds, snowy jasmynes, and waving evergreen within the large, white-marble urns upon the mantel.

While the fresh, morning dews hung upon the flowers, the grass, and the trees, while the merry notes of gay, bright-winged song-sters filled the air with their morning carol, a deathless quiet brooded over the room, and lent its influence to the broad

hall and many rooms of an old and stately Virginia mansion, of which the library and draped portrait were the most interesting characteristics.

But out among the labyrinth of trees and flowers came a strain of music, clearer, richer, sweeter than the matin of the birds, — it was the deep, gushing melody of a guileless heart, pouring forth a soul-tuned offering upon the new day's altar.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates!

And be lifted up, ye everlasting doors,
And the King of Glory shall come in!"

As the thrilling, bird-like voice rose and fell upon the fresh, morning air, the singer turned her bright, beautiful face eastward, and saw the *flushings of gold and purple* and crimson, as the glorious King of Day passed through the open portals, and scattered his dazzling rays broadcast over the earth.

With her crimson lips parted in song, and her blue eyes bright with admiration, the fair girl stood motionless, watching the rolling away of the mists from the mountain-brow, the diamond-like drops glistening on shrub and flower, as the first rays of the morning sunlight fell upon them.

Her dainty, muslin apron, caught up by one fair hand, a basket improvised during her morning ramble over the garden, contained buds and flowers of rare beauty and rich perfume.

A kind of awe stole over the fair young face as she neared a retired spot shut in by tall, stately evergreens, for, gleaming through the dark, rich leaves were the marble pillars marking the last resting-place of the family dead.

"I shall place my sweetest flowers *here*," she murmured, as she drew near a broken urn upon which was graven, "Egbert, Eula."

"I wonder who they were?" she continued softly, as she placed the dew-laden buds and feathery sprays of myrtle and sweet syringa upon the sad emblem of two lives broken. — two lives blended in one grave.

An approaching step startled her from

her mission of love, and, turning hastily, she exclaimed. —

“Good-morning, dear papa; you are an early riser, as well as myself.”

With a gentle, loving glance into the dark, stern face before her, she slipped her hand in his.

At this simple action, this quiet demonstration of love, the cold, hard face softened, grew tender and loving as a woman's; and, bending forward, he pressed a trembling kiss on the upturned brow of the lovely girl.

“Good-morning, my daughter; you seem very happy this morning.”

Then, a moment later, while a spasm contracted the heavy brows, —

“Go to the house now, Lida, my child; I shall come after a time.”

“Papa has some sorrow which I may not share,” sighed the gentle girl, as she made her way slowly through the winding walks, ascended the broad flight of semi-circular steps, and, pausing but a moment, crossed the wide hall, and entered the library.

“How quiet everything appears. It seems as if everybody on the place might be dead or asleep. What a strange old place this is. I wonder if I ever shall become accustomed to the hushed, death-like silence that always reigns here?” murmured the girl, as she buried her tiny feet in the mossy carpet. “I think I shall add fresh flowers to the urns this morning,” she continued, as she drew an ottoman near, and stepped upon it in order to reach the urns upon the tall mantel.

“Oh, that horrid picture! How I wish it could be taken away from here. It casts a shadow over my pretty flowers, it causes everything in this room to wear a sombre air. I wonder who or what it is? I have a mind to look and see.”

All this time the little fingers were dextrously weaving sprays of myrtle and sweet syringa with blush moss-rosebuds and crimson gladioli.

“There, how pretty they look. No, they don't, either; for that crape-shrouded frame will not let them look pretty. To think I've been in this house six months, and have never asked concerning that picture but once; and then— Oh, dear! how very singular papa acted.”

This petted and only child continued her soliloquy for some moments longer, and her decision must have been to examine the

draped picture; for rolling one of the heavy chairs across the room, she climbed into it.

A feeling of mingled fear and curiosity came over her as her hands came in contact with the heavy, black folds. Should she “lift the veil,” or not? But curiosity gained the ascendancy, and with a slight shudder she raised the sombre covering.

With a low exclamation of wonder and admiration, the young girl gazed upon the beautiful picture which the heavy folds of crape had concealed. A delicately rounded head, with its crown of dark-brown hair, which clustered in short, feathery ringlets about a pure white brow, and scarce touched the delicate throat, set upon a snowy neck, like a flower upon its stem. Dark, deep eyes, of the violet's own hue, peered through their long, brown lashes. A faint bloom rested on the velvety cheek, the ruby lips were parted in a smile, and glistening pearls were faintly visible.

“Never touch *that* again!”

The spell was broken. Affrighted, the fair girl dropped the sombre covering, and, turning, found her father at her side, pale, cold, but with deep anguish written upon his brow, in his eyes, and about the corners of his strong mouth. Silently he put his arms about her, and placed her upon the carpet, at the same time imprinting a tender kiss upon her fair brow.

With strange thoughts and stranger conjectures filling her mind, Lida Moncton left her father's side, and hastened from the library. Her mind was busy with surmises as to who or what the lady of the draped portrait might be.

It was evident the original of that picture was, or had been in some way, connected with her father's life.

Her abstracted manner continued during the breakfast-hour; and her father had but to look upon her contracted brow and compressed lips to know that his child was deeply engaged in thoughts of a most perplexing and foreign character to her frank, loving nature.

With a restless, unquiet feeling struggling in her heart, she ascended the broad flight of stairs, and approaching a room on the right, tapped lightly on the half-open door. A gentle voice bade her come in.

“Is it you, dear? I am so glad you have come. I had Phillips to wheel my chair to the window, in order that I may enjoy the beauties of this fair September day which

God has given us, and bark to the music of my Æolian lyre, as it breathes forth its gentle melody in answer to the soft sighings of the perfumed breeze. But come, love, I am all ready for our reading."

As the gentle speaker uttered these words, — one could see at a glance that she was a confirmed invalid, — she extended her hand toward the welcome visitor. Lida gently clasped the frail hand, and stooped to kiss the pale, pure brow, from which the crown of rich brown hair was carefully put back.

"Dear Aunt Eunice, how are you this morning? You are looking so pale and sad: has anything happened to disturb you?"

"No, love: today is a sad anniversary with me. But, come: I wish you to drive the dark shadows from my heart."

"What shall it be, dear aunt?" questioned the girl, as she tenderly stroked the brown hair.

"Longfellow's 'Evangeline,' my darling: you will find it there upon my book-case. Get it, my child, and let us enjoy its beauties this lovely morning."

Leaving her aunt, Lida hastened to comply with her request; and in taking the desired volume from the hanging-shelves, another was thrown to the floor, Scott's sweet poem, "The Lady of the Lake." Stooping to take it from the carpet, Lida saw written upon the fly-leaf, "To Eula, from Egbert." With the book in her trembling hands, and a low cry upon her lips, "O Aunt Eunice!" she reached the invalid's chair.

"Aunt Eunice, please tell me if 'Eula' and the lady of the draped portrait are one. Do tell me all about her, — will you not? Who was she? I am so anxious to know."

And, drawing an ottoman near, the speaker looked pleadingly into the pale, sad face resting against the dark-velvet covering of the invalid's chair.

For a moment a spasm of anguish contracted the pale brow, and the clasped hands were wrung in silent agony.

"Aunt Eunice! Aunt Eunice! do not grieve. I shall never mention the name again, if it causes such sorrow."

And gently unclasping the frail, white hands, she caressed them tenderly, as one would a pet dove.

"It is a sad story, Lida: yes, a sad story. Perhaps it would be best that your young heart should not become acquainted with such sorrow."

"O Aunt Eunice! if you only knew how

very anxious I am to hear of her, I know you would tell me."

And again the bright eyes looked pleadingly into those dark, sad ones, and the little fingers fluttered caressingly over the pale thin hands of the sick woman.

Gently extricating one frail hand from the loving clasp upon it, Eunice Moncton placed it softly upon the sunny hair of the speaker. And sitting thus at the old mansion window, with the bright September sun flooding the earth with glorious beams of light and life, Lida heard the sad story concerning the fate of Eula Moncton.

"There were but three of us, — Edward, Eula, and myself. Eula was the youngest, our pet and darling.

"Our mother died during Eula's tenth summer, after which we lived a very quiet, secluded life with our father, who was a stern, austere man, seldom speaking unless to command. Our life was a very monotonous one, and it was with feelings of intense pleasure and relief when, at the respective ages of sixteen, fourteen, and twelve, we were sent from home to attend school, — Edward to a military institute, Eula and myself to a select boarding-school, where we — Eula and I — were to remain until our graduation, which occurred within a year of each other. The first summer after our graduation, Edward came home to spend the summer months bringing with him two friends.

"Never shall I forget how pleasantly the golden-sandaled hours sped by on the first evening of that fatal visit, — how, while the gentle dews were kissing the flowers as they folded their petals for the night, we gathered on the veranda, and enjoyed the perfumed breath of the night, as it fanned through the vines shrouding the lattice, caused the birds to start from their first slumber as our gay jests and merry repartees, joined with merrier laughter, floated out on the stillness of the summer night. Our brother seemed wild with joy. Returning home after so long an absence from the old roof-tree, and being accompanied by his two bosom-friends, as he chose to designate them, filled his wild and then selfish heart with delight.

"Everything is just as it should be!" he exclaimed, during a momentary lull in the animated conversation. "Woolsey, here, can paint the most beautiful and life-like portraits. Eula, you and Eunice must both

sit for your portraits while Woolsey is with us.'

"While speaking, he turned to where Eula sat on a low wicker chair, half concealed by clinging vines; but the shy moonbeams were playing lovingly with the tiny white hands, which toyed with a spray of crimson cypress.

"'Come out of that shadow, pet.' — Eula was the divinity enshrined in Edward's heart.

"'Would she not make a charming picture, Haven?' he continued, drawing the beautiful girl forward into the moonlight, and, turning to the right, addressed the gentleman who was at that moment engaged in conversation with my father and myself.

"Turning his bold black eyes full upon the fair, sweet face, Geoffrey Haven softly repeated, —

"'Her eyes, her lips, her cheeks, her shape, her features, Seem to be drawn by Love's own hand.'"

"No reply was made to this bold compliment. My father did not seem to notice it. Edward gave a gay laugh as Eula wrenched her hand from his clasp, and with a haughty step resumed her former place among the vines. Even in the soft, summer moonlight, the indignant fire that burned in the face and lit up the dark-brown eyes of Egbert Woolsey was distinctly visible; and a sudden clenching of the strong, white hand conveyed the silent impression that Egbert Woolsey knew in what manner that bold compliment should be returned.

"As for myself, I disliked, I shunned, him from that moment. Yet that was but a slight annoyance when summing up the great pleasures of the evening.

"A few days after their arrival, as Eula and I sat together in our room, — this very room, dear Lida, — a merry voice called at the door, —

"'Have I your permission to enter this fairy bower, dear sisters?'

"Without waiting for a reply, Edward sauntered leisurely in, and, casting himself upon the sofa near the window, looked admiringly upon the neat carpet, with its clusters of fine water-lilies, the snowy bed, hanging book-shelves, handsomely decorated toilette, work-table, and dainty lace curtains at the windows, caught back with

their knots of blue ribbon, ottomans, and easy-chairs, and exclaimed, —

"'What a sweet nook this is! Not on quite so grand a scale as father's famous library, but much more home-like. I have but one objection to the *tout ensemble*, and that is, why do you keep that affair strung in your window, singing out its weird, unearthly music? That is my only objection.'

"'Why, brother, that is *mine*!' exclaimed Eula, with a becoming pout upon her pretty lips.

"'Yours, eh? Well, darling, that alters the case. I suppose I must try to tolerate them.'

"And, from that day to this, an Æolian Harp has been a sacred thing with my brother.

"'How are you pleased with my friends? Are they not both fine fellows? Haven is quite a catch for either one of you: comes of good family, has money, plenty of it; and knows how to spend and how to keep it, too. I would like much to see one of my sisters the wife of Geoffrey Haven. Your life would be a life of luxury; and it is and has been the wish of my heart, ever since I formed his acquaintance, that one of you might become his wife. He's smitten with pet, here, — desperately smitten.

"'Now, Woolsey is a fine fellow, a noble fellow, but poor as a church-mouse; was once wealthy; father failed in business, committed suicide; mother died of a broken heart; and Woolsey left at the age of twenty to struggle with the world. He is well educated, — in fact, a highly accomplished and talented man, and in time will make quite an artist. But he is not exactly the man for an heiress, — which you know each of you will be in your own right when twenty-one. You would have to move in rather a contracted sphere; and that I never could bear to see.'

"When he commenced speaking a deep flush had burned upon Eula's beautiful face; but before he concluded it had died out, leaving her as ghastly as the dead. Edward did not notice her singular appearance, and hearing the voices of his friends in the hall a few minutes afterward, hastened out to them.

"Two days later the sittings for the portrait commenced. The library was chosen as the room most appropriate for the artist and his work. Many pleasant hours did we pass together in our father's favorite room.

Very often my brother and his other guest were present at the sittings, and then I began to observe these young men attentively, and to study them closely. Egbert Woolsey, the handsomer of the two, was quiet and gentlemanly, with great depth of energy, intellect, and fascination lingering within his dark-brown eyes, upon his broad, white brow, and firm but beautiful mouth. His every gesture was full of grace and beauty; the slightest tone of his voice was sweetest music.

"I often look back with astonishment upon those summer months passed in the charming presence of Egbert Woolsey, and wonder that I did not yield my warm, impulsive heart unsought to the many manly virtues of this poor but aspiring artist.

"Geoffrey Haven was handsome, exceedingly so; yet there seemed to be a sinister expression lurking about the great black eyes and sensual mouth of this wealthy Adonis. His conversation was clothed with bravado, and a desire to be constantly thrusting some rude jest toward Egbert Woolsey on account of his poverty and profession.

"I experienced a decided aversion toward Geoffrey Haven the first time I looked upon his handsome, wicked face, sinister eyes, and bold, bad mouth. And yet, strange as it may appear, he was evidently the favorite of my brother, and soon became one with my father. Eula and I shrank from the bold, fascinating manner which he assumed in addressing us, and turned to find enjoyment in the quiet, manly conversation of Egbert Woolsey.

"Such were the two suitors of my sister Eula, — for it was soon apparent that both were of one mind upon this one subject, though they entertained a secret aversion toward each other for this sameness of opinion.

"They both loved Eula, but how differently: Egbert truthfully, purely, willing to lay down all save honor for her love; Geoffrey madly, passionately, willing to dare anything, everything, to gain possession of her beautiful person. If Eula was engaged in the library in the morning with the artist, Geoffrey Haven bore her off in triumph in the afternoon for a ride among the hills, a stroll along the river banks, or a promenade through the serpentine walks of the great old garden.

At such times Egbert Woolsey would re-

main quietly at my side, speaking in his rich, musical voice of the many beauties of nature and art. Now and then, with a smile upon his lips, and a far-off, dreamy expression in his brown eyes, he would speak of his profession, and of his hopes for the future.

"Day after day fell beneath the stroke of Time's polished sickle, and was garnered into the great harvest of the Past.

"Our guests began to speak of their departure with evident regret.

"You have rendered our visit so very charming that my heart refuses to bid you adieu," said Geoffrey Haven, as we rose from the table, and prepared to leave the breakfast-room, just two days before their intended departure. "Never shall I forget the Moncton Homestead, and the delightful hours passed with its beautiful and interesting inmates. Miss Eula, can I have the exquisite pleasure of enjoying a farewell ride with you this morning?"

"I saw Egbert Woolsey press his beautiful white teeth upon the strong under-lip until the blood came, and noted the look of pain and consternation that passed over my sister's beautiful features.

"I'll order the horses," exclaimed Edward hastily, before Eula could accept or reject the invitation.

"I read at a glance that all present could divine the object of the intended ride; likewise we all knew that the portrait had been pronounced ready for exhibition that morning; but no, — that purpose had been designedly thwarted.

"As the equestrians swept past the veranda, down the broad walk, and through the arched gateway, Egbert Woolsey turned away from my side, with a low moan upon his lips, and entered the library.

"Two hours later they returned, and Eula hastened immediately to our room, where she found me awaiting her. She told me the story in a very few words, with a mantling of the warm blood to her cheeks and fire to her eyes. Geoffrey Haven had made an offering of fortune, heart, and hand at her shrine, and had been rejected mildly, positively, but in a ladylike manner.

"She pleaded headache as an excuse, and did not appear at the dinner-hour; and she really was suffering intensely.

"Several hours later I left her sleeping quietly, and, taking a favorite book, I stole

gently down-stairs, and entered the library. I knew that I should find it deserted, for the long afternoons were passed by the young gentlemen in smoking, and lounging in the hammocks which had been swung upon the upper veranda for their especial pleasure.

"A dreamy quiet brooded over the house and grounds. Not a sound was heard: the September day was lying calmly, nervelessly on the lap of Mother Earth.

"Ensnconcing myself within one of the deep oriel windows, and dropping the curtains, I gave myself up to thought and my book. But the fingers of some sprite of dreamland pressed upon my drowsy eyelids, closed the volume on my lap, and I slept. How long, I know not; but by and by my senses were aroused, and, no longer led captive by the charms of the fairy-land, sleep, I heard a rich, manly voice, tremulous with emotion, exclaim, —

"It is not so beautiful as the original, my own Eula."

"Brushing aside the heavy damask curtain which concealed me, I drank in the beautiful picture at a glance.

"There in the costly frame which my father had ordered from the city hung the beautiful, life-like portrait which now wears a shroud of crape, mourning for its original. Before it, casting alternate glances of pride, love, triumph, and idolatry upon the beautiful creation of his genius, and the more beautiful creation of his Creator, was Egbert Woolsey, his arms clasping the slender form of my beautiful sister, his affianced bride, — for in a few whispered words of love and mutual confidence between them I learned why Eula had rejected Geoffrey Haven, and how truly her heart was in the keeping of her artist lover.

"How quiet, how still, the great house appeared! The sun was marrying himself unto the night amid surroundings of purple and amber and gold; a few golden arrows, the last of the many, stole in through the open window, and rested upon the lovers like a halo.

"A dreamy, delicious stillness seemed brooding over us at the sunset hour. The happy ones felt its delightful influence, and, drawing the beautiful form nearer his bosom, Egbert Woolsey pressed kiss after kiss upon her soft, silky curls, pure white brow, violet eyes, and rose-bud mouth, — pausing only to murmur brokenly, —

"My beautiful, my love, my bride!"

"A slight noise at the door caused me to look in that direction. Shall I ever forget what I there saw, standing within a few paces of the unconscious lovers?"

"A dark, fiendish face, wild, maniac eyes, a hand containing something, the silver-mounting of which flashed in the faint light of departing sunbeams.

"If not mine, — not his! came a hoarse shriek.

"Two loud, quick reports followed each other in rapid succession, and, in the deep, dark gloom of woe that fell upon me, I saw the two figures, which were clasped in each other's arms, reel and fall.

"My God! I have killed both of them," shouted Geoffrey Haven, with a hoarse, demoniacal laugh, as, dashing his pistol to the floor, he turned, and rushed frantically toward the window where I was concealed.

"Horror froze my blood, and chained my tongue. I sat within the window-seat with clenched hands and distended eyes peering through the rapidly gathering gloom.

"Ha! ha! both dead," shrieked the wild, unearthly voice of the murderer, as he dashed over me, through the window, causing me to fall backward upon the veranda.

"I did not lose consciousness, — my lips even parted in a faint cry as I felt the sharp, agonizing pains darting through my body. I was conscious of moving lights, dark forms, and faces white with fear; conscious of a wild shriek which burst from my quivering lips, caused by the deep agony experienced as they lifted me from the marble floor of the veranda.

"For weeks I knew no more. I waited at death's door for my loved sister to open it unto me. But she came not, and after a time I came back to life and misery.

"Ah! what had I to live for? Eula and her lover slept in the same coffin beneath a waving evergreen. My father slept not far from them: grief had broken his heart. My brother had fled, none knew whither. Geoffrey Haven, the wretched murderer, had taken his own life.

"For years I lived alone, a helpless cripple for life. Our old nurse — Eula's and mine — was all the companion I desired. The housekeeper and my father's agent — a very honest and good man — attended faithfully to all my duties.

"At length, after twenty years' silence, I

received a letter from my brother, telling me that he was broken in health, and as miserable as when he left me, — for he had buried forever from his sight his love, his light, his beautiful, fair-haired, English wife. He prayed that I would receive him kindly, forgive him for deserting me when they placed his idolized sister in the grave, and look upon his orphan Lida with love.

“Receive him kindly? Yes; my heart yearned to greet my brother once more.

“Two short months have you been with me, my darling child, yet you bring back my Eula so vividly before me that many times I close my eyes, and imagine that my lost one hovers over me with her gentle sympathy and loving caresses.”

The sweet, tremulous voice of the speaker paused, ceased; for tears choked her utterance.

“Aunt Eunice! Aunt Eunice! how sad, — how very sad.”

And the bright head of the English or-

phan girl was buried in the folds of the dark mourning dress which shrouded the slender form of the invalid.

“Would that I could in truth be to you as your loved and lost. Take me to your heart, dear aunt. Teach me to be as pure and good as your beautiful, sainted Eula. Oh, may I prove a blessing, a source of comfort and joy to you and my loved father, for your hearts are filled with sad memories.”

“Heaven grant that your life may be as pure and true as hers, dear Lida, but God forbid that it should be crushed in its bloom as her young life was!”

“Amen!” responded the clear, sweet voice.

And the fair head bowed itself meekly beneath the baptismal kiss which dropped, as the gentle dews upon the fragrant heart of the water-lily, upon her radiant brow from the pure, spiritual lips of the invalid aunt.

THE ELOPEMENT.

BY C. E. STONE.

The old gentleman had been constantly growing more excited during the interview. His rubicund face grew redder still, and the veins stood out like whip-cords on his forehead. The young man, who had been excitedly pacing the room as he talked, stopped in front of him, and bringing his clenched fist down upon the table with a force that made the pens dance in the rack, exclaimed:

"These are not idle boastings, Mr. Hardcash; I can prove all that I assert. I can show you—"

"Silence!" roared the exasperated father. "I don't want to see; leave me, and never darken my doors again!"

"But, my dear sir, let me tell you—"

"Will you leave? I won't listen to you. Here, John!"

The servant entered the room in answer to the call.

"Just let me explain—"

"Silence! John, show Mr. Talbot out. Don't ever let me see you again, young man; and if you as much as look at my daughter again, I'll prosecute you. Don't speak to me; leave!"

The servant was holding the door open for him to pass out.

"I am sorry—"

"Silence!"

Tom Talbot passed out, and the servant closed the door after him.

He jammed his hat upon his head, and strode down the path to the gate.

His hand was on the latch; he took one look back, in hopes of catching a glimpse of his Helen.

There she was at the window, and she made a sign for him to wait; so he strolled out at the gate, and down the street.

She soon overtook him, and they walked along together.

"What did father say, dear Tom?" she inquired, anxiously.

"He kicked me out of the house," said Tom, savagely.

"You don't mean to say he used violence towards you, Tom?"

"Well, no; I was speaking metaphorically. He told John to 'show me out,' which is the same theoretically as kicking me out."

"Never mind your metaphorically and theoretically—what did he say?"

"He said 'silence!' that's all he would say, except to tell me never again to darken his doors. He wouldn't talk himself, nor let me talk."

"Then I suppose we must part," said Helen, with a sob.

"Not if my name's Tom Talbot!" returned the owner of that cognomen, with vehemence. "Do you think I am a baby, to be bullied by an old curmud— Beg pardon—an old gentleman, I should say. No, not if you will stand by me."

"I will, I will, dear Tom!"

"And you won't marry that young popinjay, Frederick Fitz-Noodle?"

"No, never."

"Not even if he will take up your father's note when it comes due?"

"No, no."

"And your father insists on your having him?"

"No."

"And you'll be true to me, poor as I am, and much as your father dislikes me?"

"Yes, dearest Tom, yes."

"Then we'll elope!"

"What! elope? O Tom, I can't!"

"Yes, you can; I'll arrange it all. Just do as I tell you, and it will be all right. We'll elope, and when we get through our wedding-trip, we'll come back and live with the old cur—gentleman."

"But, Tom, I don't understand—"

"Never mind if you don't. I don't want

you to understand. You have confidence in me?"

"Yes, dear Tom, I trust all to you."

"Then follow my directions. I will send you a note tomorrow; you drop it on the stairs unopened. Tomorrow night go to bed early—tell your father you are sleepy. Don't undress, but wait till you hear your father leave the house and drive off in a carriage. Then put on your outside things, and meet me at the side door. I have arranged it all with your servant-girl Betty. Do you understand?"

"Yes. But, Tom, father never goes out in the evening."

"I'll arrange that. Just do your part according to directions, and leave the rest to me. And now I must leave you, as I have a lot to do. *Au revoir*, my love, till tomorrow night."

They had reached a secluded street. Tom pressed his lips to hers a moment, and then was off.

She watched him out of sight, and then returned home.

After Tom's expulsion from the house, Mr. Hardcash sat for some time, gasping like a fish out of water. He was very choleric, and also very short-winded. Finally, however, he recovered his temper and his breath, and called for John.

That worthy answered the call promptly.

"John," said his master, "don't you ever let that young scapegrace into the house again."

"No, sir."

"And, John, I want you to see that I have all the letters that come to the house before anybody else sees them."

"Yes, sir."

"And, John, I want you to keep your eyes open, and if you discover anything of a suspicious character, let me know of it."

"Yes, sir."

"That will do, John. You may go."

That night was a sleepless one for Mr. Hardcash. He was on the verge of financial ruin. He had a note to pay the next day of ten thousand dollars, and no funds with which to meet it. He was considered to be wealthy, but his property was mortgaged heavily to make good a number of extensive losses.

His only hope was in Frederick Fitz-Noodle, a wealthy young man, who promised to pay the note in case Helen would consent to be his wife.

Morning dawned at last on Mr. Hardcash's weary eyes, and breakfast was scarcely over when Mr. Frederick Fitz-Noodle was announced.

He was shown into the library, where Mr. Hardcash was seated.

"Good-morning, my dear Mr. Fitz-Noodle. Pray be seated. I suppose you came to obtain my daughter's answer to the proposal with which you honored her."

"Yes," drawled Mr. Fitz-Noodle, "that's what I came for. But where is the charming young lady?"

"I have sent for her; she will be here in a moment."

"Exactly. Well, ah! you think she will have me?"

"No doubt about it."

"Then the money's yours, my dear fellow. I have the check made out, and will sign it when she accepts it, you know, ah!"

"Well, I hear her coming, and I have no doubt her answer will be satisfactory."

"Good-morning, my dear Miss Hardcash, or Helen, as I hope I may be allowed to call you," said Mr. Fitz-Noodle, making a low bow to the lady as she entered the room.

"Don't flatter yourself, Mr. Fitz-Noodle. I sha'n't give you the right to call me anything but Miss Hardcash."

"What!" shrieked her father.

"What!" gasped the astonished suitor.

"Just what I say," she replied. "I don't mean to marry you, Mr. Fitz-Noodle, so you might as well take your departure with your check unsigned. I am not a slave, to be bought and sold with your money."

"But, my daughter," expostulated her father.

"No buts about it," she returned, decidedly. "Come ruin, come anything, I shall not sell myself for money."

Her father urged, entreated, and threatened her, but with no effect; she couldn't be moved. At length he flew into a passion, nothing unusual with him, and sent her from the room.

Mr. Fitz-Noodle took up his hat to leave.

"Can't you lend me the money if she don't have you? She may change her mind."

"No, I can't, really. Business is business, you know, ah!"

"And you won't take my note for the amount?"

"No, I can't, you know, ah!"

"Well, go to grass with your money!" cried the choleric old gentleman, losing all hope and his temper at the same time.

The young man made a hasty exit, followed by a decided oath from Mr. Hardcash.

"I never saw anything work so badly," fumed the disappointed man. "Just as I thought I had everything arranged to save myself, Helen, the ungrateful hussy, must needs upset everything by her obstinacy."

His soliloquy was interrupted by the entrance of John, whose face wore an expression of profound satisfaction, and who carried in his hand a letter.

"What is that?" asked Mr. Hardcash, as he took the letter.

"Something I picked up on the stairs; it is directed to Miss Hardcash."

"She hasn't read it, I see," remarked the father as he broke the seal.

The contents fairly made him boil over with rage. It ran as follows:

"DEAREST HELEN:—I have arranged all. We will elope tonight. At nine o'clock I will be at the side door with a pair of horses and a close carriage. I have a minister engaged, and ere morning we will be far out of reach of your old tyrant of a father, and you shall be the dear little wife of your devoted
Tom."

"'Old tyrant of a father,' indeed!" said Mr. Hardcash. "A nice little plot, but 'there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip,' my fine fellow, and I shall be ready for you. My daughter shall be locked in her room, and we'll see if she will be your 'dear little wife.'"

He folded the letter up and put it in his pocket. Then he set about making arrangements to frustrate the elopement.

Night came at last. Helen complained of a headache, and retired early. Her father saw that she was locked into the room, and the key safe in his pocket.

Then he chuckled to himself, and laid in wait for poor Tom.

Nine o'clock came, and still the old gentleman sat and watched the side door.

Ten minutes later John came running to his master in breathless haste.

"Please, sir, they've gone!" he gasped. "I saw Miss Helen go out at the front door just now, and the young man met her, and they jumped into a carriage, and drove down street."

"Dolt!" yelled the father, "why didn't you stop them?"

"I couldn't. Miss Helen was outside the door before I noticed her."

"Put the horse in the carriage, quick! I must overtake them."

John flew to obey the order, and Mr. Hardcash, in desperate haste, put on his overcoat and hat, and rushed out to help harness. A drizzling rain was falling, and the night was unusually dark.

It took but a minute to harness, and Mr. Hardcash started off at a fast rate in the direction John told him the runaways had taken.

The road led to the next town, which was six miles distant, and to which the couple were evidently fleeing.

The father calculated to overtake them before they reached the town, and if he failed in that, to arrive on the scene in time to stop their little arrangement.

So he urged on his horse, and the rain beat in his face, and the mud flew, and the darkness shrouded the earth from view, but his mind was bent on overtaking the fugitives, and he paid no heed to his disagreeable surroundings.

He had travelled about five miles without seeing or hearing anything, when suddenly his horse brought up with a jerk. Evidently something was ahead. He peered into the gloom, and made out the outlines of a covered carriage. It was surely the one he was pursuing.

"Stop!" he shouted.

They only increased their speed. He whipped up his horse, and kept close to them.

"Stop!" he called again. "Give up my daughter!"

"Not much, old man!" came from the forward carriage, in a masculine voice.

"I'll prosecute you, you thief!" yelled Mr. Hardcash.

There was no reply to this threat; the father tried to drive up side of the other carriage, but the darkness and the fleetness of the other horse prevented him.

And so they kept on, and before long they entered the town.

The first carriage drew up before the hotel, and Mr. Hardcash stopped likewise.

He sprang to the ground, and rushed to the other carriage. A man was just helping a female out. The light shone brightly on her face. It was Betty!

He looked at the man. It was one of his own men. He was astonished—thunder-struck!

"What are you doing here? Where is my daughter?" he asked.

"I left her in her chamber," said Betty, with a grin. "I don't know where she is now."

Mr. Hardcash was unable to speak. His anger was so great that he gasped for breath.

Betty slipped into the house, and her escort remained to see what his employer would do.

After a short pause, during which he stood like one just awakened from a dream, Mr. Hardcash got into his carriage again, and turned his horse's head homeward.

He drove at a more moderate pace than he had maintained when he passed over the road before.

At the house once more, he threw the reins to John, who was awaiting his arrival, and started into the house.

He had scarcely got inside the door when a pair of soft arms were thrown about his neck, and a pair of warm lips pressed to his.

"Forgive me, dear father," pleaded his daughter, "for deceiving you; but I did as Tom told me, and now I'm his wife, and here's your note paid."

"What do you mean?" he sputtered.

"Tom paid it. But come in, and get off your wet clothes, and we will tell you all about it."

Completely dazed, and clutching the note in his hand, he allowed himself to be led into the sitting-room.

Tom met them at the door, his face wreathed in smiles. He took his father-in-law's coat and hat, while Helen conducted him to his easy-chair in front of the open fire.

His thoughts were so absorbed in the possession of his note, that he didn't appear to notice who was in the room.

"There, father," said Helen, taking a low seat at his feet; "now dear Tom will tell you all about it."

"Yes, sir," said Tom, stepping up, "I'll explain all. You see I have paid your note. I am well off. My uncle, who was a wealthy merchant, left me his entire fortune at his death, two years ago.

"I lived in the city, then, and of course

when I came into possession of this property, I was courted by everybody, but particularly by mammas and papas with marriageable daughters. They fairly disgusted me with their attentions; and though I had a great desire to be married and settle down, I had a horror of being married for my money.

"Finally, I determined to seek a place where I was unknown, and, while pretending to be poor, see if I could find a wife who would love me for myself alone.

"I came here, as you know, a year ago, and went to work for Squire Tracey. I met your daughter, and fell in love with her. You frowned on my suit, and I determined to win her as a poor man. I have done so. She loves me, as every wife should love her husband—better than parents, better than riches, better than power, better than everything except her Maker.

"When I learned of your embarrassment, I tried to help you, but you refused to listen to me, and drove me from your house. As a last resort, I planned this elopement. I wrote the letter which came into your hands, and Helen dropped it on the stairs unopened purposely. I procured the assistance of Betty to play the eloping young lady, and your man to elope with her.

"As I expected, you started after them. As soon as you had gone, Helen left her room, to which she had an extra key, and met me at the door, where I had a carriage ready to take us to the parson's, to whom I had confided my plot, and who was ready to marry us on our arrival.

"Today I took up your note, and deposited an amount equal to it in the bank to your credit.

"And now what do you say? Shall we seek a new home, or will you accept me as your son-in-law, and let us remain here to keep you company?"

The father could say but one thing. Relieved of his pecuniary trouble, which had benumbed his better nature, his paternal feelings once more awoke to action, and, with tears in his eyes, he stretched out his hands over the heads of Tom and Helen, who were now kneeling at his feet, and murmured in trembling tones:

"Bless you, my children, bless you! and may you always be as happy as I am at the present moment."

THE FATAL SAFE.

BY JAMES DABNEY.

SOME years ago I chanced to be in England. I was travelling for my health, and, as I was very anxious to see the "Mother Country" from every point of view, I passed a year in going through it, and, in that time, mingled with all classes, and went to all places to which I could obtain access. I was the guest of the Duke of —, at his beautiful country-seat in D—, and in the disguise of a vagabond, I penetrated the lowest haunts of vice and crime in the great city of London, and came out from them safely. My friends used to laugh at me for what they called my "oddities," but I took their teasing good-naturedly, and told them that, as I had come to England to see, I was determined to gratify my curiosity to the utmost. As may be supposed, I gained much strange and interesting experience. Indeed, I learned from my own observation that the most exciting incidents of romance are not half so wonderful as those which one may see around him every day, if he will only take the trouble to look for them.

One morning I was walking along the river side in London, gazing at the long rows of masts, and the black chimneys of the steamers, when my attention was attracted by something on one of the piers, and I went over to look at it. When my curiosity was satisfied, I stood for some time looking at the foul current of the Thames, as it flowed beneath me. I never

saw water so full of filth. It seemed as if it might be the great sewer of the universe, through which all the refuse matter of creation was flowing. It was almost sickening to look at it.

Turning to a policeman who was standing by me, I said:

"It would be a wretched death to drown here, in such foul water."

"You may well say that, sir," he replied, politely. "A man as falls down there, 'll never get up again. But a plenty of 'em are drowned there every day, poor devils. Only a week ago I saw a man drowned right under us here."

"Indeed," said I; "how was that?"

"Well, you see, sir," he replied, "it's rather a long story; but, as I take you for an American, by your speech, and as you might like to hear something of the ways of this city, I don't mind telling you, if you have time to listen."

I assured him I would be only too willing to listen to him, and would be very much obliged to him for the story.

"London, sir," he began, seating himself on a bale of goods, "is as full of thieves as heaven is of angels. They are a reckless and dangerous class, too, sir, and give us officers of the law a sight of trouble in trying to keep them down. Sometimes you find them the most innocent and respectable-looking people you ever saw; others

are regular swells, who can be told by their flashy dress and genteel appearance; while others still are such as you'd better not approach, without a good weapon of some kind. Some of these people are stupid enough; some are too sharp for even the most expert detective; and some succeed by their genuine impudence.

"About a mile above here, on this street, is the office of a wealthy firm of ship-merchants. They are very close and stingy men, sir, and instead of taking a building suitable to their wealth and trade, they hire a small mean office, opening right on the street, and which is hardly secure from the most blundering burglar. I am on the night-police, sir, and my beat carries me just in front of their office. They have spoken to me about keeping a good watch over their premises, but I have told them I cannot see my whole beat at once, and that I was confident some bold thief would break in some night, and rob them. Sure enough, my prediction was realized about a week ago.

"It seems that Messrs. Cuttworth & Co., the merchants I speak of, never keep as much as a hundred pounds in their office after hours. They have only one small safe, in which their books are deposited, and, as they always make it known that they keep no money in this safe, they have felt confident that no one would care to attempt a robbery for the sake of a few account-books, which could be of value to no one but the firm.

"It happened, however, about a week ago, that Messrs. Cuttworth & Co. received a remittance of ten thousand pounds after the banks had closed. It was an unusual occurrence, and it was too late to deposit the sum in bank; so, after consulting about the matter, the firm concluded to place the money quietly in the safe until the next morning, and say nothing about it.

"That night, about twelve o'clock, I was coming up my beat, when I saw four men pushing a small safe along the streets. It was an extraordinary sight, and I supposed they expected that the very boldness of the act would be their greatest protection. It was a clear starlight night, and every one of their movements was perfectly plain to me. I recognized the safe at a glance, as the property of Messrs. Cuttworth & Co., and I was confident that these men were engaged in a daring robbery. My first thought was to spring my rattle for assistance, and to frighten them off; but, on reflection, I de-

cided not to do so. I wanted to see what the thieves would do with the safe, as it was likely that I might, in this way, learn something of value to the law. Besides this, it's a habit of mine to let a man think he's perfectly secure and unsuspected, before I pounce upon him.

"From the ease with which the men moved the safe, I could see that they were powerful fellows, and that, if they chose to offer any resistance, I would have my hands full. I loosened my revolver and examined it, and keeping it in my hand, crept along cautiously in the shadow of the buildings, until the thieves stopped on this pier. Then I crossed the street a little below them, and crept up on them. One descended into a large four-oared wherry, and the others fastened a rope to the safe, and prepared to lower it into the boat.

"Now was my time, and springing forward, I shouted:

"'I have you now, you villains.'

"The men were frightened, and let go the rope. The safe had been balanced on the edge of the pier, just ready for lowering, and the men had gotten further in their work than I suspected. At the sound of my voice they let go the rope, and the safe fell over the pier into the boat with a loud crash. It struck the man who was in the wherry, ready to receive it, and fairly drove him through the bottom of the boat, which at once filled and sank. The three men on the pier escaped, but the man in the boat was either killed by the fall of the safe, or drowned. The next day I went to the office of Messrs. Cuttworth & Co., and found them in great excitement over what had happened. I told them what had become of the safe, and during the day it was fished up, and its contents found to be uninjured. It is not very well known how the thieves knew there was money in the safe, or whether they knew it at all, but, as the porter of the firm has not been heard from since, it is believed that he was concerned in the robbery, and that he was the man that was killed in the boat."

"I suppose Messrs. Cuttworth & Co. rewarded you handsomely for your services," I said, as the policeman concluded.

"They gave me a guinea, sir, and told me I was an efficient man," he answered with a dry laugh.

I dropped a shilling into his hand, and, thanking him for his story, went on my way.

THE GHOST OF A FACE.

BY FREDERICK H. DEWEY.

Darkness was gradually closing over the sedate little village of Edgeville, and night was drawing on apace. The subdued twilight was giving place to gloom deep and opaque: night was settling down over Edgeville and its quaint old church under the hill.

A gloom of awe seemed to pervade the village, which, remote and small, was in its liveliest days but a dull old hamlet. But tonight seemed unusually dismal and sombre, perhaps owing to the solemn tolling of the bell in the tiny belfry of the little church.

Toll! toll! Out on the heavy night air the tones sounded mournfully clear and distinct to the adjacent villagers, but vague and spectral to the farmers away over the hills, to whom they half seemed the ghosts of ringing bells. In the door of more than one farm-house far and near, whose locality was revealed by a little twinkling star of candle-light, men, women, and children, stood gazing toward the village and listening to the solemn peals. In the village itself, the inhabitants, possessing more urban indifference than their rural neighbors, were collected in knots on the corners; and it was perhaps singular that every face was turned toward the church, which was invisible, being deeply in the shadow of the hill under which it stood.

Toll! toll! The ringing had begun at sunset, and it was now quite dark; but the measured tolling continued until the num-

ber of sixty-one strokes had been sounded, when the peals were heard no more.

Near by the little church — being, in fact, only separated from it by the churchyard — was a small, neat cottage, the dwelling of the sexton, a little, withered old man, who, having been born in the village, and never having made a day's journey away from it, was a sort of pensioner of the village, who considered him a village institution, and withal looked up to him as an oracle.

Adam Hill was town-clerk, as well as sexton, and postmaster besides, — although his postal duties consisted in distributing the half-dozen or so of letters which arrived weekly by the mail-rider. As he could actually pronounce the majority of the polysyllabic words scattered through the columns of the newspaper which occasionally strayed into Edgeville from the great outside world, and as he was known to have quoted Latin once in his youth, he was considered a person of boundless sagacity and erudition, and to him all mooted questions were referred. On red-letter days, such as Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and so forth, he would ascend the dusty pulpit of the quiet old church, — for Edgeville was unable to maintain a parson, — and, with "words of learned length and thundering sound," would hold forth to the admiring villagers, to their intense edification and possible enlightenment.

Adam Hill was a prominent man in Edgeville.

While the bell had been tolling, Adam Hill's hale old wife had been composedly knitting, in the demure society of the smouldering fire, the purring cat, and snoring hound curled up on the red-brick hearth,—raising her head ever and anon to glance out of the window across the graveyard to the church where her goodman was tolling the bell in memory of Squire Lovell, who had departed from Edgeville and this world five years before, at the age of sixty-one. On the anniversary of his death, the church-bell was tolled every year. Why, no one could tell; for, though the squire had been rich, he had also been snug, if not miserly, and exacting, as many an unfortunate tenant of his—and he had owned half the village—could testify. Perhaps the reason was that as Squire Lovell had been held in awful respect by the simple villagers during life, their veneration for him resulted in keeping his anniversary by tolling the bell as it had been tolled at his funeral five years previously.

There hung a mystery over his death. He lived in the old family mansion on the skirts of the village, and, although known to possess wealth, lived entirely alone, as he had no relations. True, he had a nephew, Eugene Lovell, a barum-scarum boy of sixteen, who, having rebelled against the authority of his severe and exacting uncle, ran away, and had never since been heard of. This occurred a short time previous to the squire's death. The old man, brooding and revengeful by nature, cut his nephew off without a shilling, leaving all his accumulated wealth to the son of his old nurse. The will was drawn on the 9th of October, 184—, and the next morning the squire was found dead in his bed.

Stricken by heart disease, some said; apoplexy, suggested others. But not a few whispers floated about that, as the squire had been of robust habit, and on the day of the drawing of the will had been in excellent health, his sudden death was marvelous and suspicious. But no marks of violence were perceived on his person, and the old squire was buried, the house was closed to all saving bats, owls, rats, mice, and spiders, and the fortunate heir obtained possession of his fortune.

But although the squire was dead, he was not forgotten. On every anniversary, when Adam Hill tolled the church-bell at sunset, the villagers would think kindly of the stern

old squire, whom in life they feared, and speculate on the cause of his sudden death. Each succeeding anniversary augmented the number of those who believed the old man had met with foul play, until finally, on the present one, not a man or woman in the village had a different opinion. But suspicion attached itself to no one, and no attempt was ever made to ascertain the cause of his death.

As previously mentioned, the squire bequeathed his entire property to the son of his old nurse, Gilbert Ray. Prior to the squire's death, "Gil Ray," as he was familiarly called, had been employed by the neighboring farmers in common farm labor. He was a young man of industrious habits, but close-fisted and moody; and, being morose, revengeful, and averse to the society of his acquaintances, had acquired the name of "Dark Gil,"—though he was never addressed by that sobriquet, as he possessed a terrible temper, and visited vengeance on those who provoked it.

After the squire's death, Dark Gil went out to farm service no more, but shrewdly invested that portion of his inheritance which consisted of money, and employed himself in attending to his tenants.

The tenantry had deemed the squire an exacting landlord, but Dark Gil proved far more so. Woe to the unfortunate delinquent, for he showed him no mercy. On rent-day he regularly appeared, and coldly demanded the rent. If it was forthcoming, he received it in silence; if not, no matter how reasonable the excuse advanced by the tenant, it was of no avail,—for Dark Gil would seize household goods to its equivalent value. He was inexorable, and the villagers' dislike of him increased every rent-day.

It was a subject of occasional comment among the villagers that Dark Gil never visited the mansion-house. Indeed, he seemed to avoid it; for since the squire's death he had not visited it, and allowed it to run to decay quietly.

The sexton's wife sat knitting until the bell ceased to toll. Soon afterward the door burst open, and in came Adam Hill, excited and trembling, with a look of awe and alarm on his wrinkled face.

"Husband! husband!" cried the good-wife, as Adam sank into the nearest chair.

"Nannette, I've seen the squire's ghost!" whispered the old sexton, involuntarily

looking over his shoulder in the direction of the church.

"Seen the squire's ghost!" gasped his frightened helpmeet.

"Ay! just as he used to look when he and I were young, and rivals for the favor of my Nannette. I was pulling the rope on the last stroke,—the sixty-first,—when a current of cold air swept over me from the interior of the church, and, looking up, I saw the squire's face (no more), looking as he looked at twenty-one. The blue eyes looked calmly into mine for barely a moment; then the face disappeared, and I left the church,—losing no time, I can tell you."

"Lord preserve us! And you are sure you saw his young face?"

"Sure!"

And the expression of awed conviction on the old sexton's face left no doubt in his wife's mind.

A pause ensued, during which the old couple looked at the smouldering fire. Then said Nannette:—

"What can it mean, Adam?"

"Foul play!" responded Adam gloomily.

"Mercy on us!"

"I always thought the squire did n't die a natural death, and now I know it!" declared Adam, striking his knee with his clenched fist. "For why did his young face appear to me but to remind me of the boyish love we bore each other, and for the sake of that love to set wrong right, that an old man might rest easy in his grave? Nannette, the squire was always good to me, always,—though I did get the lovely Nannette, for whose sake he lived and died a bachelor,—and now I'll do a good turn for him if I can; and tonight to boot! Get me the lantern, Nannette, and my oak stick, and sit here by the fire until I get back,—there's a dear girl,—for I go to the squire's house tonight."

"Lord preserve us! You surely can't be so mad!" cried Nannette, as Adam rose. "To the squire's house! why, do you know they say it is haunted?"

"I know they say it is haunted, and, after what I've seen tonight, I know it ~~is~~! It is haunted by the spirit of an old man who can't sleep easy in his grave because foul play goes unpunished." Then he said sturdily: "Don't be skeered, Nannette; the squire's ghost won't harm old Adam Hill, his best friend."

But Nannette clung to him.

"Adam! Adam!" she implored; "don't go,—don't! You'll never come back again if you do. Promise me you won't go."

"No, Nannette," said Adam sturdily, "it is my duty to go, and go I must and will. Don't be afeerd, old lady,—the squire's ghost will never hurt the squire's best friend!"

So saying, Adam bustled about, procured his lantern and oak stick, and, resisting the entreaties of his anxious spouse, set out on his expedition, leaving Nannette by the hearth, shaking like a leaf, with her face buried in her hands.

Up the quiet, grass-grown, village street Adam Eill's lantern bobbed and glimmered, casting fantastic shadows round about, and giving to his moving legs a shadow resembling a piece of machinery.

The squire's house was situated at the other side of the village, at the extremity of a long, wide lane, between two rows of lofty poplars, which threw the lane into dense obscurity. Even in vivid moonlight—and this night was dark and murky—the lane was of inky darkness, and, as it led to the old house, it was avoided by the simple villagers, who regarded it with dread. Perhaps for several years no human foot had trodden the lane after darkness had fallen, and the children feared to frolic in its shades, though its attractions to them were manifold.

But Adam Hill, though superstitious, and usually as afraid of the ghostly lane as his neighbors, neither looked to the right nor left, as, plunging into its obscurity, he strode sturdily toward the old house. His eyes were bent upon the luminous spot made on the ground by his lantern, and he was deeply pondering over the cause of the apparition which had alarmed and amazed him so in the church. He finally became abstracted, but was abruptly brought to his senses by a concussion which caused him to look up.

He had run against the crazy old gate which of yore used to exclude the cows of the villagers from the tasteful grounds; but since the squire's death the premises had gone to decay. The fences rotted and fell in many places, leaving great gaps which afforded the village animals ingress to the luxuriant herbage of the lawn. Like the fences, the gate was crazy, and, with a slight push, Adam passed through it, and strode

steadily up the graveled walk toward the house.

As he walked along, he could not fail, even in the deep gloom, to observe the decay and desolation that had fallen over the grounds, and to contrast them with their former elegance. The last time he had set foot on the premises was on the day of the squire's burial, when house and surroundings were well-kept and attractive; and now, as he looked about on the decadence, old Adam felt sad at heart.

He walked up the graveled path, and soon arrived before the house. The mansion was large and rambling, of two stories, with a piazza on the ground floor extending the whole length of the house, and a corresponding one on the floor. Numerous doors and windows opened out on these piazzas, and in its former days the house was a pleasant one, facing the south, commanding a view of pretty Edgeville nestling among its groves, and of a smiling landscape beyond. The roof was square, like the house, slanting gently up to a graceful cupola, which had a window in each side. In this cupola the squire had been wont to sit in the dying day, smoking his pipe, and reading his book,—for Squire Lovell had been happy in a refined literary taste. Many a time, in passing by, Adam had seen the squire's gray head in the window of the cupola; and now, as the remembrance occurred to him, he mechanically raised his eyes to the place.

What was his alarm—ay, terror—at beholding a white face framed in the window!—the face of the squire as he had looked when a boy of twenty. The face was plainly visible, albeit the night was dark and the atmosphere thick; and so distinctly did Adam see it that he shuddered under the dark eyes which were steadfastly regarding him with a look of deep significance.

Perhaps the sexton may have had some lurking doubts whether he indeed saw the face in the church. If he had, they were now dissipated; for in the cupola above him—where it had formerly been seen—was the squire's boyish face turned steadfastly toward him.

For a moment old Adam was terrified, notwithstanding his natural fearlessness, and his firm belief that the squire's ghost would occasion him no evil; for there is something in the apparition of a dead friend which appals the stoutest heart. But

Adam's terror was only momentary. With a strong effort he collected his senses, and regained his courage, as the face slowly faded, became a nebulous blur in the window, and finally disappeared.

Adam looked steadfastly at the window. He now could only determine its locality by distinguishing the white window-casing through the gloom. One keen look satisfied him that the face had disappeared. Then, grasping his oak stick more firmly, he sprang with youthful agility upon the piazza.

"It is a chain! a chain!" he cried. "He appeared to me in the church, and again here. Does that mean for me to follow him here? Of course it does; and old Adam Hill will follow Squire Lovell in death as he did in life!"

With this declaration, the sexton shifted his cudgel to his left hand, and tried the ponderous front door. Adam himself had securely locked the house after the squire had been laid in his grave, and he clearly remembered securing this one with bolt and lock. He was confident that no one had entered the house since that time, for the villagers would rather have risked their lives than venture within the grounds after night-fall, and studiously kept aloof in broad daylight; and no pedestrian travelers wandered to Edgeville, for it was remote from the bustling towns of the world. Nevertheless, to his surprise, the door yielded readily to his arm, and swung back with a dismal creaking, an unusual sound, which caused a scampering of rats and mice throughout the hall and the adjoining rooms.

The weird sound of the tiny feet caused an icy shiver to traverse Adam's spine for a moment, and when all was still again, the silence was so profound, so awful, that he hesitated whether to turn, and make the best of his way back to the safety of his comfortable fireside and gentle Nannette. But the strong sense of duty engendered by the apparition outweighed bodily fear, and, drawing a long breath, Adam again grasped his cudgel in his right hand, and strode along the hall.

Throughout the quiet house his footsteps echoed noisily, reverberating dreadfully in distant rooms, and causing numberless bats to take wing, and flit erratically about the hall; invisible creatures, eldritch and uncanny, fit inhabitants of an ill-omened house when human beings avoid it, and

condemn it to melancholy decay. The night-wind, sighing through the spectral firs on the lawn, swept through the house, bearing upon its wings rank smells of decay and mildew, and set doors creaking, windows rattling, and blinds banging,—all of which noises conduced not a little to increase the perturbation which was rapidly undermining Adam's hardihood. There is no sound so dismal, so creative of awe, so fraught with dread, as a night-wind moaning through a deserted house. But Adam strode sturdily down the hall, striving to repress the undefinable fear that was gradually pervading him. He essayed to whistle: although he could whistle like a flageolet, his lips refused to obey. He was well acquainted with the house, and went directly to the broad staircase at the further end of the hall, for he had determined on ascending to the cupola, where he had first seen the face. His foot was on the lower step, when he halted abruptly, and listened, while icy chills traversed his spine, and crept among the roots of his hair.

Was it the night-wind that had caused the unearthly sound at the door? Adam looked, and every particle of color forsook his face.

Standing by the door, distinctly visible in the doorway, was the youthful figure of the squire, standing with white face turned toward Adam, who shook like a leaf. One arm was extended, pointing to the floor; and Adam could not refrain from a startled outcry as he remembered that on that very spot the squire had been last seen alive.

Adam's courage departed, and, sinking on the stairs, he buried his face in his hands. He was stricken with terror. Down the hall came heavy footfalls, directly toward him. The apparition was approaching him, but he was unable to move,—even to fly. Terror had paralyzed him.

The footsteps advanced to his side, and a hand was laid upon his shoulder. Adam screamed.

"Fear not," said a calm voice, whose accents he well recognized. "Have you then quailed so soon? Have courage: no harm befalls the innocent, but justice shall overtake the guilty. Cast off your terror,—for which you have no cause,—and follow me."

The calm voice and evident friendliness of the speaker, if not dissipating Adam's terror, so far re-assured him that strength

returned to his limbs, and, rising, he mechanically followed the apparition, which stalked up the stairs.

Ere they had reached the landing above, Adam became vaguely aware that the apparition was a strange spectre,—for his gait resembled that of a living person, and his footfalls equaled his own in heaviness. To Adam, the idea of a ghost was a draped vapor, in the semblance of a mortal, gliding through the air noiselessly, penetrating walls and passing through doors with the greatest facility, and speechless; whereas the squire's spirit had spoken, his footfalls sounded heavily on the stairs, and, on arriving at the landing, he was obviously short of breath.

Without even looking to see whether the sexton was following, the spectre stalked up the long "upper-hall," as it was called, and entered an open door at the further extremity,—the squire's room, Adam saw by the dim light of his lantern. The room was precisely as it had been left after its occupant's burial. The furniture was disarranged, and the book he had been reading on the evening before his death lay on the stand by his bedside, in company with his half-smoked pipe, tobacco-box, the lamp, and match-safe. His slippers, unmolested by mice, lay on the floor by the bed, his dressing-gown was lying across a chair, and the bed itself—mildewed, and thickly covered with dust—was disordered precisely as the neighbors had disordered it when they lifted the squire from it to lay him in his shroud.

To Adam it half seemed a nightmare, and he was inclined to deem himself laboring under a delusion. The fantastic shadows cast from the furniture by his lantern, the profound silence that rested over the house, the awful spectre, and, finally, his terrified self, seemed like scenes and characters of a bad dream. But Adam Hill was never more thoroughly awake than at that moment.

A monstrous rat leaped from under the bed, and ran across the room, passing between him and his ghostly companion. The incident was trivial, but it sent Adam's heart throbbing to his throat. A bat flitted about the room, and his knees shook; and his hair fairly rose as a blind banged in a distant window, and the night-wind moaned through the corridors. Then the conviction came overwhelming upon him that he would never leave that house alive.

The spectre had been standing by the bedside, gazing steadfastly down upon the bed; but he now stalked toward a closet across the room. As he did so, he looked significantly at Adam, who, divining his meaning, followed him.

The door of the closet was ajar, and, as he observed it, Adam remembered that in the excitement consequent upon the squire's death the closet had not been opened. Extending his arm, the spectre noiselessly opened the door, and motioned to Adam to enter.

The sexton obeyed tremblingly, and when he arrived in the door he raised his lantern, and looked around the closet. Articles of wearing apparel were hanging on the walls, which Adam passed over with a cursory glance; but on the floor were two articles which elicited a cry of surprise and anger from him. One was a peculiar handkerchief of dark-red material, flecked with sickly yellow squares: the other was a vial, whose label bore a death's-head and cross-bones, and the startling warning, "Prussic Acid: Deadly Poison!"

"Foul play! I knew it!" screamed Adam, almost dropping his lantern in his excitement. "And, O Heaven! I know the murderer."

The spectre spoke.

"Your coming to this house of dread and ill-omen, at dead of night, and in the face of hereditary superstition and simple apprehension, is laudable, and shall be rewarded. It is not strange that you quail. But listen, and know all."

The village clock had struck the hour of twelve before Adam returned to his Nannette, who, terrified by his prolonged stay, was almost frantic. Sobbing for joy, she flung herself into his arms with the ardor of a bride. Although Adam returned her caresses, he did so mechanically, for his manner was pre-occupied. The worthy old soul, not lacking in the voluble inquisitiveness of feminine old age, harassed Adam with a legion of questions, which he evaded as well as he could without giving offense; but the good dame, piqued at her master's seeming churlishness in refusing to satisfy her curiosity, finally went to bed in a pet, while Adam absently followed her example.

Nannette fidgeted all night, unable to sleep a moment until Adam should reveal the secrets of his expedition. That some-

thing strange had happened she well knew by the unusual thoughtfulness of his face; but to her persistent questions he merely returned a shrug of his shoulders. They were sitting at breakfast, when Adam suddenly struck the table a mighty blow with his fist.

"I would never have dreamed it!" said he, with another blow.

"Dreamed what, Adam?" eagerly inquired Dame Nannette.

"That the moon was made of green cheese."

Nannette grew red, and her eyes sparkled; but, restraining her anger, she essayed one more question.

"Adam, tell me: What did you see last night?"

"The Evil One," replied Adam.

Thereupon, Nannette burst into tears, and flounced away from the table in high dudgeon.

Adam apparently did not observe his wife's indignation, but ate his breakfast absent-mindedly, rose from the table, got his oak stick, and left the house, leaving poor Nannette bathed in tears, and seething with curiosity.

Adam Hill walked briskly across the village toward Gilbert Ray's residence, with eyes downcast in meditation, and bringing his oak stick down with a thump. The landlord, pursuant to his close disposition, lived hermetically in a desolate cottage on the opposite side of the village from the mansion-house. Adam soon arrived at the cottage, walked up to the door, and knocked sharply.

"Well,—come in!" was growled, rather than spoken, by a voice which the sexton recognized as that of Dark Gil. He entered a small, meanly furnished room, cold and cheerless, and saw Dark Gil seated at his desk poring over his rent-roll.

"Well, what do you want, sexton?" demanded Dark Gil sharply, eying Adam savagely. "Want your cottage repaired, I suppose. I generally receive a similar petition every day. Pest! as if they could n't live in a house as good as their landlord's. They are all better than mine," he complained, casting a glance round on the bare wall.

"Which is not saying much," thought Adam.

But he discreetly kept his own counsel, only saying, as he took a chair,—

"Since you won't invite me to sit down, Mr. Ray, I'll do so uninvited."

"What is your business?" again demanded the landlord impatiently. "Be quick, for I'm hurried this morning."

Adam cast a look out of the window. Three men were approaching the house. He turned again to Dark Gil.

"What do you suppose I saw last night?" he inquired, looking steadfastly at the other.

"Pest! How should I know?" snapped Dark Gil.

"The ghost of Squire Lovell?"

"What!" shouted Dark Gil, starting to his feet with an ashy face, and overturning his chair.

"The ghost of Squire Lovell!"

"Ha!"

Dark Gil made no other comment, but glared in fury and terror at Adam, who bore it without flinching.

"Yes," resumed the sexton, casting a second look out of the window, "and facts have come to light which prove that the squire met his death by foul play. Murder will out."

"Murder! It is false!" cried Dark Gil, with white lips. "Sq—he died of apoplexy."

"He died of poison!" thundered the sexton. "See, here are the accusers,—silent, but, oh, how true!"

And he took from his breast the peculiar handkerchief and the vial he had seen in the closet of the squire's room.

Dark Gil glared at Adam, and his face was terrible to see.

"Where did you get them?" he gasped.

"Where they had been dropped by the murderer. Ha! Hands off! Help!"

Dark Gil had sprung upon Adam to seize the accusing articles. The force of his attack was so great that the old man was hurled to the floor; but three men rushed into the cottage, and throwing themselves on Dark Gil, secured him after a desperate struggle, bound him with stout cords they had evidently brought for that purpose, and laid him upon his bed. Then one young man advanced,—so precisely like the spectre of the previous night that even if Adam had not formed his acquaintance he would instantly have recognized him.

"Villain," he said sternly, "your deed is discovered, and the hand of Fate brought it about. I am the nephew of Squire Lovell,

returned from foreign lands to avenge murder. Listen, all," he said, addressing his coadjutors and Dark Gil, to whom he related the marvelous occurrences which had led to the detection of Squire Lovell's murderer.

Eugene Lovell, having run away from his uncle, betook himself to a seafaring life, and by diligence and ability had attained the captaincy of a New-York vessel plying between that port and Liverpool. During his last voyage a mutiny occurred among his crew, which he suppressed, mortally wounding the ringleader, an ex-convict, and a desperate man, who, accidentally discovering that Captain Lovell was nephew to the squire, made a startling dying confession. Five years before he had escaped from prison, wherein he had been confined for smuggling. He fled to Edgeville, and the officers were on his track, when Dark Gil, who had reasons of his own for assisting him, harbored him until the officers abandoned the search. Then he demanded requital, and on the day the squire's will was drawn in his favor, he prevailed upon the man, by the guaranty of a large sum, to steal into the squire's bedroom at night, stupefy the old man with chloroform, and then take his life by poison.

Brutes can be grateful, and so was the felon. He did the deed,—but, fearing the gallows, surreptitiously used for administering the chloroform one of Dark Gil's peculiar handkerchiefs, well known throughout the adjacent country, and after the deed was done threw both handkerchief and vial into the closet, in order to divert suspicion from himself. Strange to state, the closet was never opened; and had not the marvelous chain of events led to the detection of the murderer, Dark Gil might have lived and died unsuspected by the simple villagers.

By the time Captain Lovell concluded, Dark Gil was raging, and in a few hours' time was a raving maniac. He was immediately conveyed to the mad-house at the neighboring town of Ware, where he may be seen to this day (for we believe he is yet alive) raging in his cell. He is "dangerous," and his insanity consists of his laboring under the mortal terror of an imaginary enemy, who is constantly attempting to apply to his nostrils a handkerchief saturated with chloroform, in order that he may poison him while in a state of stupefaction. He lives in continual terror, starting up out

of sleep, shrieking, and beating off his implacable foe; and the sight of a bottle or handkerchief will throw him into convulsions.

Captain Lovell succeeded to the property, and liberally rewarded Adam Hill for his zeal. The mansion was entirely repaired

and refurnished, the grounds were rejuvenated, and the premises underwent a general and beneficial change. And now, on every anniversary of the squire's death, old Adam Hill is the lion of the day, which he spends in relating the story of *The Ghost of a Face*.

THE GHOST OF LOVE LEE.

BY JANE G. AUSTIN.

CHAPTER I.

A GREAT fire of hickory and oak roared up the wide stone chimney of a loghouse in the southwestern part of Pennsylvania. A rude cottage enough, embodying more of man's necessities than his desires, and planted almost alone in a wild and savage country. But in no palace, no crowded court, could firelight have danced in sweeter eyes, or sparkled among sunnier curls than those of Love Lee as she sat upon no better seat than a great log of wood, her chin resting upon her hand, her dreamy gaze upon the glowing coals, while the other hand held smooth on her knee a bit of printed paper, the torn leaf, as it seemed, of some elegant volume, for the paper was thick and creamy, and the gilded edge flashed back the firelight. There was a picture at the top, a spirited figure of a mounted knight riding beside a wide river, in whose midst lay a little island. Beneath were the lines—

"His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed,
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode,
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot."

And these lines the young girl, sitting so motionless before the glowing fire, murmured aloud more than once, not needing to look at the torn leaf. She had learned them as we often, less appropriately say, "by heart."

Upon this pretty maiden reverie broke of a sudden the discordant sound of a man's voice singing loudly the chorus of a coarse drinking song, and shuffling along the rough path as if he found the footing uncertain.

The girl started, hid the picture in her bosom, and rising to her feet moved slowly toward the door; but before she reached it the new-comer, stumbling heavily forward, burst it open and reeled into the kitchen.

It was a young man, his handsome face strongly resembling the white one so steadfastly regarding him, but bloated and flushed by debauchery. Closing the door, Love said, very quietly:

"Jim, you said you wouldn't, to-night."

"Wouldn't what, you little fool? I haint drank nothing, if that's what you mean."

"O Jim, how can you say that?"

"Why shouldn't I, then?" demanded the man, fiercely.

"Because it's not true."

With an oath the man raised his heavy hand above the head of the fearless girl. She did not stir, but only fixing her eyes with earnestness upon his face, she asked, gently:

"What did our mother say when she was dying, Jim?"

Jim's hand fell, and he dropped into a seat.

"I don't care," he said, doggedly. "I aint a going to be told I'm a liar; and if I did take a nip to keep the cold out such a night as this, what's the harm, I say?"

Love sat down again upon the log at the other side of the fire and regarded her brother uneasily.

"You've been down to the store at Mally, haven't you?" asked she, at length.

"Yes, and what then?" was the sulky retort.

"Only you know I never like to have you there of an evening."

"Because Bill Brennan keeps it, and you stick out against Bill, when, if you knew it, he's the best friend either you or I have got to look to."

"I'm sorry you think so for yourself, Jim, and as for me, I know better."

"Now, Love, I'll jest tell you what it is. There's been enough nonsense with you and your notions, and now it's going to be stopped. I passed my word to Bill to-night that we'd all go down to the square's to-morrow morning, and you and he'd come back man and wife."

The girl started to her feet, her face showing white and ghastly in the firelight.

"You said that, Jim!" exclaimed she.

"Yes, just that; and that's all that's to be said about it," returned her brother, with a dogged resolution of tone, far more threatening than violence.

Love felt it so, and after looking wildly in his face a moment, she sank down and buried her face in her hands.

Jim looked at her with an uneasy trouble, but no relenting in his face.

"Come, gal," said he, at length, "I'll just tell you how it is, and then you'll see, same as I do. After mother died, for a year or two I couldn't make both ends meet, and I borrowed money, a hundred dollars of Brennan. First I gave him a note, but a year ago last summer I wanted another hundred and a half to buy that new horse, and agin he lent it to me; but that time he wanted a mortgage of the place here, and so I give it to him—"

"The farm, and house, and all?" asked Love, aghast.

"Every stick and stone, gal. And when I was drafted last month I wasn't a going to be shot down jest to please Abe Lincoln, so I bought off—and where do you think I got the money then?"

"I never thought," said Love, faintly.

"No, you gals never think nor know about sech things, and that's the reason you'd ought to do as you're told and not be contrary. Well, then, that three hundred dollars came from the same place that the first two hundred and fifty came from, and that was from Bill Brennan's pocket. So as the mortgage was pretty nigh run out, he just made it up to six hundred and I give him a deed of the place outright, and promised he should have you for a wife, and a good likely husband he'll make you, and that no further off than to-morrow."

"You sold him this place! It is his own this very minute?" asked Love, in bewilderment.

"Everything about it—you and all," returned her brother.

"But it was part mine, wasn't it?" persisted Love.

"O, you're under age, so I signed for you. I sold your part along with my own," replied Jim, rather uneasily.

"I didn't think, Jim Lee, you could do such a mean thing," said Love, fixing her eyes upon his bent face, while a world of scorn deepened the soft tones of her voice.

"Mother left me to you to look after," continued she, presently. "And how have you done it? Hasn't it been me that has had to look after you instead? How many times have I pulled you into the house and got you to bed when you couldn't have done it for yourself? How many times, while you were lying there, have I been into the lonesome woods and driven home the cattle,

and then put them up, and even looked after your horse, while you—well, I never spoke of it before, nor I wouldn't now—I'd have gone on doing just so all my life; but how have you looked after me? You've left me many a time with a man's work to do while you was away, I never asked where, and now you've sold me and the very roof over my head to a man—I won't say what sort of a man he is, but you know, and so do I. But you and he shall both be disappointed, for I will never marry him, never—not if he had paid my price twenty times over, and you may tell him so."

She stood there in the firelight, splendidly beautiful, with her bright blue eyes, and flushed face, and lithe proud figure, and so Jim thought as he glanced up, and down again. He rose and went to the little window, where he stood some moments staring into the black night. But when he turned, Love saw that his mind was set in the obstinate determination. She had learned to read his face. He spoke, not unkindly:

"I don't mind your hard words, Love, for it's a hard row you've got to hoe, and I do suppose I haven't done just the right thing by you. But it's all settled now—there's more than I've told you between Brennan and me. He knows about something—something I did once—never mind what it is, but he's got the whip hand over me, and, through me over you. You're under age, and I'm your gardeén. The law says you've got to do jest as I say, and so the square himself would tell you. And the upshot of the whole is that to-morrow noon has got to see you Mrs. Brennan or me in jail at Franklin."

The brother and sister looked silently each in the other's eyes, and it was strange to see the hard resolute lines of the man's face deepening in the curves of the fair girl's face opposed to it. She spoke first.

"Jim, I know you mean it, and I shan't try to turn you. But recollect that I'm father's child as well as you, and when the time comes I can be just as set. I dare say you've got the power to make me marry that man, and I see you mean to use it; but mind you now, Jim Lee, if ever Bill Brennan calls me wife, it shall be when I can't hear him."

"What do you mean?" asked her brother, in a hoarse voice.

"I mean," said the girl, steadily, "that I will kill myself before I'll be married to

him. I mean that unless you tell him to-night, for I hear him at the door, that I will never be his wife, that you and he will surely find a corpse in my bed to-morrow morning."

It was a horrible thing to see the fierce light that blazed from those blue eyes, the hard deep lines that added ten year to those delicate features, the stern resolution that possessed a face and figure one half hour before so soft and girlish.

The man looked at her steadfastly, and then laying a heavy hand on each of her shoulders, bent his face close to hers. Quite sober it was now, and as white and hard as her own.

"Hark you, then, Love Lee," said he, slowly. "So sure as to-morrow morning comes, so sure shall you marry Bill Brennan, be you dead or alive, willingly or unwillingly."

The young girl looked at him in silence. She did not speak or move. Still keeping his heavy soiled hands on her shoulders, the brother gazed at her as though attempting to read her thoughts. At last he said, and his voice was low and passionate:

"You shall marry him."

The girl did not answer. There was a look in her eyes that almost made him quail, angry as he was.

"Do you hear me?" and he shook her as though shaking would compel compliance with his wishes.

"I hear you," was the quiet, firm, determined answer of Love.

"And you will obey me?" demanded he.

"No," came from her lips in a low but decided tone.

CHAPTER II.

THE brother and sister still stood looking in each other's eyes, when the door swung rudely open and a man with bad coarse features, and mean figure, stamped into the room.

"Tell you what, neighbors," said he, throwing himself into a chair by the fire and thrusting his feet close to it, "'taint a night to keep your company standing on the doorstep while you finish up your family preachments. How d'y'do, Lovey dovey? Has Jim told you that to-morrow's the wedding day? Come here and see the pretty breastpin I've brought you."

Without the smallest sign that she either

saw or heard him, Love slowly turned and entered the little bedroom that had been her mother's and was now her own, tendering to the two men no other good-night greeting than the decisive click of the bolt as she fastened herself in.

"A spunky little devil. She looks right harnsome to-night, but as mad as blazes," remarked the lover, with a coarse laugh.

"She's dead set against the match, as I told you she'd be. Says she'll kill herself first; and I don't know but she will," muttered Jim, drawing the log stool close to his companion's chair.

"Pooh! pooh! You aint such a fool as to be turned by a girl's temper, be you?" sneered Brennan. "She'll no more kill herself than you will; and a week from now she'll be as chirk and as fond of her husband as the willingest wife that ever stood up to be spliced. Only 'twont do for you to give in, Jim; 'twont do for your own game," added he, threateningly.

"You needn't twit," retorted the other, savagely; "I haint no thoughts of giving in. I'm a man of my word, and you'd ought to know, and my word's passed both to you and to her that to-morrow noon shall see Love Lee your wife, be she dead or alive, willingly or unwillingly."

He spoke the last words in a slow strong voice, as if it was an oath he was taking from which there could be no appeal. The meaner villain sitting beside him shuffled uneasily with his feet, and said, with an effort:

"O, nonsense, Jim, she'll never think of such a thing as killing herself. What's the use of talking about it?"

In the next room where Love knelt beside her bed trying to pray, those cruel words came between her and her God. As she heard them she rose up and stood rigid and determined, her cold hands clenched, her heart beating like madness, till a red glare danced before her eyes.

"Must I die—and only seventeen?" was the thought that shaped itself in her mind.

Then with the inconsequence of despair she began to think of the beautiful lady who had stopped at the log farmhouse many years before, on her journey through the country, and how she had given a book to her mother, and how she herself, a naughty little girl, had stolen away to the barn with it, and how Jim finding her there, had snatched the book so rudely that one leaf

remained in her hand, and how, angry at her reproaches, he had flung it down in the yard where his great dog Bose had torn it quite to pieces. And the memory of her mother's sorrow and disappointment made the girl's lips quiver with an emotion she had not shown at thought that she must die that night.

Then her thoughts wandered on, and she softly murmured:

"From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode."

And the poor overstrained brain mockingly shaped above the dreadful reality oppressing it, an airy mirage of the gallant knight, Sir Launcelot, bending from the saddle to grasp her hand and raise her to a seat in front of him. Then would they ride away and away, into that fair and splendid world whence the bright lady of the book had flashed for an hour upon the lonely forest hut,—away from all this horror, this—what was it so terrible hanging over her? With a sharp rebound the dormant consciousness revived, and Love, pressing two ice cold hands upon her eyes, knew and felt once more the present, in all its sharp reality.

She heard, too, the voices of the men without, and mechanically listened to their speech. Brennan was saying:

"—and it's all along of these cussed niggers that we're at war with the South this minute. Who cares whether they're slaves or not? For my part I'd like to have the handling of a gang; and if the South whips, as it's like to do, I'll go down there and have some of my own."

"And Pete Wilson has gone and volunteered?" asked Jim, angrily.

"Yes, the black hound! Yes, and honest men like you and me have got to be taxed for the very vittles we eat, so as he can dress up in soldier clothes and strut round with a gun on his shoulder. Then if he gets shot, as I hope he may, there's his brood to come upon the town. Cuss him, and them, too, I say, and the nigger government that's trying to set a lot of Cuffees over the heads of white men."

"So I say, by—; and I'd like to clean 'em out of this deestrick same as they was cleared out in York city a while ago," said Jim, savagely.

"D'y'e say that?" said his crafty tempter.

"Well, then I'll tell you what a lot of us is

going to do this very night. We're going up there to Pete's to pull down the old shanty, or burn it down if it comes handier, and if the varmin that swarms there gets burnt up too, why it aint to be wondered at, and accidents will happen, you know."

He spoke the last words with an attempt at levity, but their fiendish import would not thus be disguised, and stood out brutal and menacing.

A silence followed, almost interminable to the girl, standing in the dark room beyond them, rigid with horror, and holding back her breath to catch what should come next. It was Brennan's voice.

"Well, Jim, be you afraid to go?"

"Afraid! I aint afraid of you, Bill Brennan, I'd have you to know that."

"Pho, Jim, don't be a fool. I know well enough what a smart fellow you be when you get your blood up, but I thought you seemed rather dashed about this."

"You thought!" sneered Jim, in whom bad liquor and latent remorse had wrought a condition of fierce excitement. "And what business had you to think I was a coward any more than yourself? Tell you what, Bill, you needn't suppose because I owe you money that I'm going to be put upon. There's an easy way of settling up all that's between us, and I don't know as I value your life over my own if one or 'tother's got to go."

Brennan's hardy face turned a sickly yellow, but his self-possession did not fail him.

"Why, Jim," said he, soothingly, "what's up now? Aint you and me the best of friends, and going to be brothers tomorrow morning? Come, old boy, give us your hand; and if you're in want of a few dollars, as you was saying just now, why you know where to come for 'em."

"All right," growled Jim, sullenly. "Only don't you go to calling me a coward. Now let's hear about cleaning out this nigger hole. Who's a going?"

Brennan in a low voice mentioned some half dozen names, all strange to Love, and then added that they were to meet at his store at twelve o'clock that night, and that he had only come to the loghouse on the chance of persuading Jim to join them.

"And we might as well be scratching along that way. I'm going to treat the fellows to drinks all round, and they'll be there in season. Come on," concluded he.

Jim muttered an inaudible reply, and

Love heard him rise and approach her door. She softly laid her fingers on the bolt to make sure that it was fast. The latch was slowly raised, and then dropped.

"Love," said her brother's voice, irresolutely.

She did not answer.

"Just speak a word, Love. Say yes, if nothing more," whispered Jim, hoarsely. But still she was silent.

"Come, Lee," called Brennan, from the doorstep. "Don't stand fooling there any longer. She'll be all right in the morning. That's all settled, and your word's passed."

"Yes, my word's passed, and I'll keep it," muttered Jim, and the next moment the outer door closed behind the two men, and Love knew herself alone in the house.

The tension of mind and body gave way at once, and sinking slowly to the ground the poor child lay there, a victim crushed and broken. But God's hand was over her. No further sense of her own peril could have roused her to exertion, and she might have lain hopelessly there until the very hour of sacrifice, had not a sudden flash of consciousness brought to mind in their full meaning those words of Brennan's—

"— and if the varmin that swarm there get burnt up too, why it aint to be wondered at—"

Love leaped to her feet, and new life tingled through her veins. Those men, her own brother with them, were plotting the horrible death of these wretched negroes, and she was lying idly there making no effort to prevent it! This was the thought that now entered into the mind of the young girl, and departed thence no more till all was done. With no pause for consideration, she saw her course straight before her, and took it.

Without unbolting the door, she raised the window and stepped out into the frosty blackness of the night. Plunging into the forest, she kept steadily forward, guided only by—what is it that guides help to the helpless, safely to the hopeless, God's mercy to those ready to perish?

Two miles of rough woodland lay in a direct line between the loghouse and Peter Wilson's hut, and a shorter interval between that and "the store" where the band of ruffians had agreed to meet; but these were yet nerving themselves with bad whiskey to the work in hand, when a slender figure glided from the forest, crossed the

little clearing about the negro shanty, and softly raising the latch, entered, closing the door behind her.

"Good Lord! who be dare? It's a sperit, shore!" ejaculated Susan Wilson, raising herself from the midst of her sleeping children. A dismal shriek from one who chanced to lie awake, echoed the statement of his mammy, and in another moment the cabin would have been a scene of confusion past remedy, when a clear voice said:

"Hush! Make no noise at all. I am Love Lee—you remember me, Mrs. Wilson. I came to see little Jack when he was so sick—"

"And that you did, miss. And when the pore little feller was goin', his last words was—"

"Yes, but listen, now. There are some wicked men coming here to-night to burn your house, and I cannot tell what still more horrible things they might do if they found you here. They are drunk, and they hate you all because you are colored, and because of the war. They will be here directly."

Poor Susan, tumbling out of bed, sank upon her knees, clinging to Love's feet.

"O Lordy, Lordy, miss! what's we gwine ter do? And Pete gone for a sojer an' all. We've better ha' died when Jackey did, the whole on us. O missy, what's we gwine ter do?"

"You must keep quiet, in the first place," returned Love, resolutely. "Then get the children together, and whatever you care very much to save. I will show you a place to hide in—"

"But there's ma'am. She can't walk a step this two year; and I aint going to leave her, nohow," said Susan, resolutely.

"Your mother? Is she lame?"

"No, but she's bedrid. She haint walked a step this two year; and she's deaf and blind both."

"Where is she?"

"Here in t'other corner, missy. You can't see 'cause of the dark; but I'll light up the fire."

"Not for the world," interposed Love, hastily. "It would only show them the way, and they'd go hunting round the first thing. If all is dark I hope they'll set the house afire, and never know but what you were all in it stifled with the smoke."

"But ma'am?" persisted Susan.

"We must carry her between us," said

Love, resolutely. "The children can all walk, can't they?"

"All but sissy, and Chloe can carry her," returned Susan, joyfully.

"And Royal must take his grandmother's bed, and we'll wrap the quilt round her. It's a very cold night and the old mine is damp."

"The old mine!" exclaimed the negress. "Lord, missy, they say it's haunted."

"I only hope those men believe it. They'll be the less likely to look for us there," replied Love, calmly. "At any rate, no ghost could possibly hurt you as much as these men certainly will, should they find you."

"That's so, missy; and shore it was the Lord hisself that sent you here to-night."

"Get some clothes on the children as quick as you can, while I wrap up your mother. There isn't a minute to spare. If you can't find their clothes, wrap them in the bedquilts. Only hurry."

"Yes, missy. Pore lilly fellers, dey hasn't much to put on but what's on 'em a'ready. We've ben awful pore 'long back, missy. The farmer folk wouldn't hire Pete 'cause de white hands wouldn't work wid him, and we couldn't raise much of anything—"

"There I'm all ready," interrupted Love. "Now come and take hold of my hands this way, and make a chair. Now get her up. Royal, come and help us."

It was a terrible strain upon those delicate arms and slender form when the old woman was finally raised to her position, but it was borne unshrinkingly. Nay, although the robust negress panted and sighed, and was "boun' to drop" more than once before the place of refuge was reached, Love showed no fatigue, no desire to rest.

Staggering behind this strangely assorted pair who bore the poor old negress reverently aloft as if she had been a grewsome idol for whom her priestess sought safety in flight, came Royal with the trappings of the bed, followed by a motley group of infants, wondering, lamenting, and only held to the forward course by the dread of losing sight of their "mammy," whose presence was the one fixed fact to their bewildered minds in the chaos that had involved their lives.

At last the procession, grotesque even in its mournful reality, reached the mouth of the abandoned coal mine selected by Love

as its destination. It was entered by a tunnel wrought into the hillside, and although hardly darker than the night without, the air was heavy and mephitic, and a sullen drip of moisture oozed from roof and sides of the cavern, so that a heavy shudder ran through the frame of the poor old idol as they laid her once more upon the bed and covered her as warmly as they might.

"Pore ole mammy! She never'll stand this long," said Susan, mournfully, as she sat down and took the two youngest children upon her knees.

"We'm cold, mammy. It's wet and nasty here," wailed the twins, vainly seeking to find room in the maternal lap. Royal, impressed with his responsibility as head of the house, said nothing, but his teeth chattered audibly. Love was distressed. She perceived that to these children of the tropics, who learn to endure cold as gradually as to change their complexions, this dank refuge was almost as bad as the fiery death from which she had rescued them. She considered for a moment.

"Stay here," said she, at last, "and keep as quiet as you can. I will go back softly, and if the men have not yet reached your house, I will go in and get the rest of the bedclothes, and whatever else I can find to put round the children. Aren't there some shawls and cloaks where I can find them, Mrs. Wilson?"

"Yes, honey, such as they be. There's some hung along right over the bed. But don't you go to resking your life for us. You've done enough, and more'n enough, a'ready. Stop where you be, and let R'yal go. He's smart as a steel trap."

"If he was seen, he'd be chased and perhaps shot. Those men always carry pistols. They wont hurt me, even if they see me, and I'll take good care they don't get sight of me. I shall go alone."

Susan did not resist. Indeed the clear young voice had a power in it to-night that might have conquered a less submissive nature than that of the negro, and with one more injunction to quiet, Love stole forth, and soon even the light crackle of her footsteps died away upon the ears of the trembling refugees.

"Say, R'yal," whispered Chloe, as the two stood at the mouth of the cavern peering into the midnight, "doe:n't you spec de angels in de white hebben jes like she?"

"Yis, an' in de brack one, too. We'm

all boun' to be alike w'en we gits dere," said Royal, rather haughtily.

"We is? An' will I look jis like Missy Love?" asked Chloe, in ecstasy.

"You'm be jes as w'ite," said Royal, rather doubtfully. "But I reck'n 'taint only de w'iteness dat makes her diff'ent from ebery body else. I specs de angel's got growed a'ready inside ob her, and kin ob shows trew."

CHAPTER III.

LOVE, meantime, crept cautiously back, until the sky seen dimly through the lower branches of the trees, showed that she was on the verge of the clearing, but at the same moment a sudden yell, and the crackling sound of fire in brushwood warned her that she was too late. A fearful curiosity still led her on, however, and she crept forward until she stood behind a giant pine upon the very verge of the clearing. The cause of the sudden outcry succeeding a quiet so intense, was now apparent.

The assassins cautiously surrounding the house, had fastened the door and windows securely, and then piled a heap of brushwood and resinous pine in front of them. When this was fairly lighted, the whoop intended to arouse the victims was given, and as Love, horror-stricken, stood watching the dismal sight, the flames leaping up caught upon the bark of the logs, upon the casings of the windows, upon every salient point, and the whole cabin was in flames.

"Hark, hear the rats squeal!" shouted one fellow more imaginative than the rest.

"Let 'em squeal—and I wish every nigger in Ameriky was roasting with 'em. Then there'd be some chance for white folks," yelled Brennan.

Love shuddered, and would have stolen away, but at this moment her eye caught the figure of her brother whom she had begun to hope was not present. Now, however, he appeared from the other side of the building where he had been setting another fire, and as the light of the burning house glared upon his face, Love saw that he had been drinking, and was now in such a condition of mad excitement as to be capable of any excess.

A terrible anxiety held her to the spot, and as she watched the crazy antics of the drunken men, and heard their yell of laughter, and obscene delight in the supposed

death agony of their victims, she found it hard to persuade herself that she held possession of her senses, and that the scene was real.

But suddenly horror gave way to terror. Jim Lee, crazy with intoxication and excitement, had been the maddest of the crowd in his demonstrations, and now seizing a ladder, he placed it against the side of the hut nearest to Love's hiding-place, and shouting:

"Come on, lads. Let's look down through the roof and see the rats squirm!" he leaped up the ladder, and in a moment stood upon the ridge of the house, one foot resting upon a trap-window which he was trying to pry off.

"No, no, Jim; 'taint safe nohow up there. Come down, old hoss. The old shanty'll cave in d'rectly. Come down, you big fool!"

So shouted his comrades, pausing in their savage glee to watch the motions of the madman who had succeeded in kicking off the scuttle, and now stood balancing himself upon the edge of it.

At this sight, Love, forgetful alike of her own danger and her brother's sins, darted forward with the cry:

"O Jim, Jim! Come down, for God's sake!"

At sound of that voice the drunken man started and turned toward it, while his bloated face turned of a ghastly white. His staring eyes fixed upon the rigid form of Love as she stood at the edge of the clearing, one hand uplifted in speechless warning, her face as white, her eyes as horror-stricken as his own.

One instant they thus confronted each other, and then, as Love, commanding the frozen current of her blood, darted forward, her brother yelled:

"It is her ghost! She's killed herself, and come to haunt me!" staggered forward and fell headlong into the flaming vault beneath. At the same instant the roof gave way and fell with him.

A wild shout rose from the pallid crowd of ruffians, and then all was still, save the crackling of the flames and the mocking patter of the leaves upon the trees.

There was so obviously no hope of rescue that none was attempted, and the men drawing close together, only looked and whispered of their comrade's doom.

For Love, she stood frozen and stunned,

until Brennan, the first to shake off the horror that had subdued him with the rest, came toward her with some kindly intention of comfort and protection working in his coarse nature. But the girl, vaguely embodying in him the sin and horror of the scene, turned suddenly and fled through the forest, so swiftly and so sinuously that her pursuer was speedily distanced, and had no choice but to return and lead away his sobered crew, every man of whom began privately to hope that his share of that night's work might never be brought up against him.

The sun was rising, when Love, tired out at last, sank to the earth, and lay so motionless that the birds and squirrels, busy in finding a breakfast in the lonely forest road, came and held council over her prostrate form, wondering what this strange growth of an autumn night might mean.

Presently to their chirping and chattering was added another sound—the rapid beat of a horse's feet, who swerving suddenly at sight of the mystery before him, nearly threw his rider over his head.

"Well, then, Bess, what's the matter? Hillo!" The latter, an exclamation relating to the unusual sight which Captain Vane now beheld at his horse's feet. And surely a gay young cavalry captain riding hastily through a woodland road at early morning, might well express thus much of wonder at finding the figure of a lovely girl, the life fading slowly out of her pale face, and no one near to solve the mystery of her appearance, for the birds and squirrels had fled precipitately at his approach.

The young man stared for a moment, and then throwing himself off the horse's back, raised one of the cold little hands in his. It quivered slightly.

"She's not dead," concluded Captain Vane, and next he chafed the blue-veined temples, and scattered handfuls of morning dew in the pale face, and breathed his own warm breath into the still mouth. He was so fastidious in his notions of honor, this young man, that he would not kiss the pretty lips even when his own were so near them, but so soon as color came creeping back to them, and the violet eyes opened languidly upon him, he stood upright, having propped his patient in a sitting posture against the bole of the great chestnut tree, where were collected the ordinary birds and squirrels.

"Are you better now?" asked he, gently. "O yes, I am very well," said Love, quietly. "But how came you here?"

"I?" exclaimed Captain Vane, a little surprised at this sudden turning of the tables, for this very question was the one he intended to put the next moment.

"Why, my good horse, Bess, brought me here," added he, smiling. "But you?"

"Yes, I know your horse. It is in the picture, but your hair is not so long—"

And with the last murmured word upon her lips, Love's head dropped forward, and she fell into a heavy sleep, the sleep that was to save her poor scattered wits and bring them home for future service.

Captain Vane turned and looked at her in a sort of comical dismay. What was his next step to be? I promise you if the question had been of the storming of a fort he had not hesitated so long, or felt one half the misgiving with which he now took the drooping figure of that lovely girl in his arms, and placing it upon the neck of his horse, contrived to hold it there while he mounted. Then he laid the head upon his breast, while all the wealth of glittering hair tumbled down about his arm and mingled like sunshine with the night black mane of the wondering Bess.

"There's nothing for it but to carry her to the next farmhouse. I suppose they will look after her there," said he to himself, as he constrained the impatient horse to her gentlest pace.

But the next farmhouse looked desolate and uninviting, and at the next one the farmer was occupied in beating his wife, and before the next one was reached Captain Vane had concluded he should do just as well not to stop until he had crossed the line into Virginia and reached camp, for, after all, these rude Pennsylvania farmers were not the people to trust with a charge such as this in his arms. He had far rather confide it to good Mrs. Phillips, the chaplain's wife; and besides, he should like to know what the queer little wood-nymph could have meant about a picture of himself and his horse.

CHAPTER IV.

AND so it came about, that when in the middle of the afternoon poor little Love opened her eyes once more and looked about her, she found the canvas roof of a

tent above her, a good bed beneath, and at either hand the grave kind faces of the chaplain and his wife, while at the foot stood Captain Launcelot Vane, with an expression of intense anxiety clouding his handsome features.

"She is recovering. You had better leave us now, gentlemen," said the chaplain's wife.

"One moment," persisted the younger man, as he took the chaplain's place beside the pillow. "Do you know who I am, my—dear?"

A pretty blush transfigured the pale face.

"I—don't—know," murmured Love.

"I—thought—but I am so confused;" and she wearily closed her eyes again.

"There, there, Captain Vane. Really you must go," expostulated Mrs. Phillips, and Launcelot remorsefully withdrew.

Half an hour later the chaplain's wife, carefully stealing out of the tent, summoned her husband and the captain to council.

"The poor child is dreadfully worried about some black people who are freezing in a coal mine, she says. She began to talk about them directly after you left us, and grows more and more agitated. She will worry herself into delirium if we cannot soothe her in some way. Do you know what she means, Captain Vane?"

"No, but I think she would tell me," said the young man, eagerly. "Let me come in and speak with her."

Mrs. Phillips hesitated, but the chaplain said with a smile:

"Yes, Mary; let the captain try."

So Launcelot returned with the good lady, and by gentle questions, and careful soothing soon brought the poor frightened girl to such quiet and confidence that she could tell her story, passing lightly over her own

and her brother's share in it, but dwelling earnestly on the forlorn desolation of Susan Wilson and her family.

"Can't you help them?" asked she, at the end, fixing her feverish eyes upon Launcelot's face.

"Yes, Love—may I call you Love?"

"O yes. But will you help them?"

"Directly. I will go myself if I can get leave again so soon. Perhaps the colonel will have them brought into camp; but at any rate they shall be placed in perfect safety. Tell me now just where to find them."

But when Captain Vane, followed by a force sufficient to overawe all opposition, rode into the town of Mally, he found that the refugees, driven by cold and hunger, had wandered out into the forest, had been discovered, brought to the town, and remorsefully fed and clothed by the very man who had been foremost in the attack upon them.

Furthermore, they were now settled in a cabin near the town, and were to be furnished with work, by which they might fairly hope to live in more comfort than they had ever known.

The captain learned, too, that the charred remains of Jim Lee had been recovered from the ruins of the burned shanty, and quietly buried in the village churchyard.

It was not, however, till a later day, when Love was once more strong and blooming, that he ventured to tell her this, and when he did so she hid the shame and horror that filled her eyes upon the very breast where her drowsy head had lain in that long strange forest ride. For Launcelot had found a truer Love than ever blessed the storied knight from underneath whose

"helmet flowed

His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot."